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The Christukula Asram

(Family of Christ Asram)

TIRUPATTUR, N. A.,

South India.

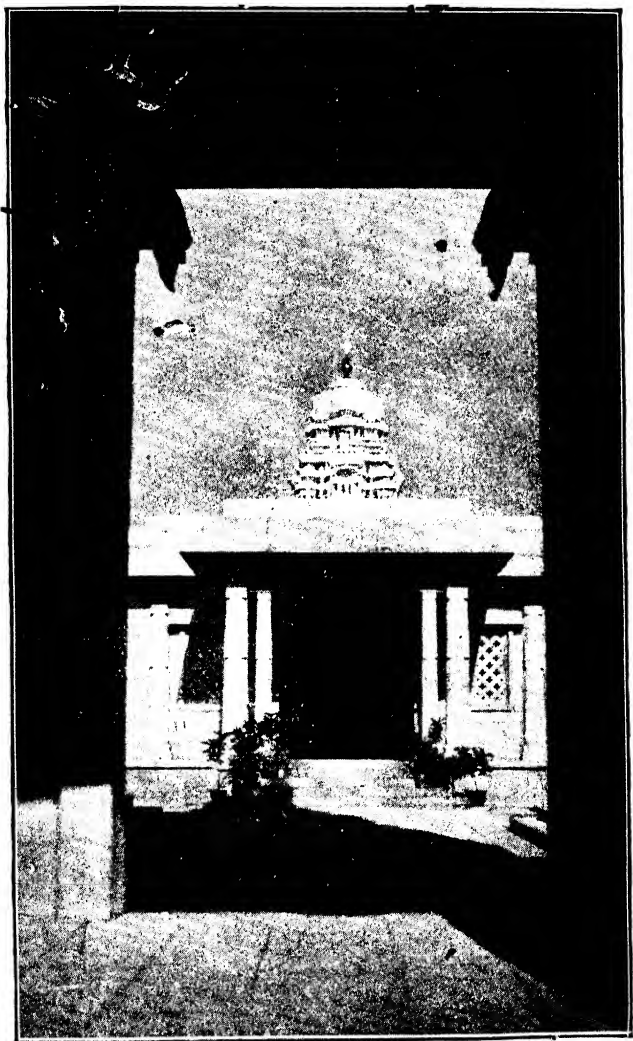


1940



N.M.S. PRESS,
ROYAPETTAH, MADRAS, '40.





The Jebalaya seen through the Mokathuvam
(entrance gate)

The Christukula (Family of Christ) Ashram

AIMS and IDEALS.

In writing about this Ashram, we have felt it necessary to refer to personal experiences in order to make things clear, in the confidence that those for whom these pages are meant will understand the spirit in which they are written.

During the years immediately proceeding the dreadful war of 1914—1918, many professing Christians seemed to recognise their kith and kin only in those of their own particular colour or race or nationality, or even in those only of their own particular little sect or denomination. With the nations of Europe all armed to the teeth, suspicious and defiant of one another, and with the Christian people blinded by this spirit of self-seeking isolation, it required no great prophet to foretell the bursting at any moment of the conflagration that involved almost every nation of the world. The organised churches that should have exercised a ministry of reconciliation and understanding, were carried away, and too often used as tools for war propaganda. The memory of those dreadful years is still vivid to many, but although the eyes of some have been opened and some are filled with a new idealism of peace and reconciliation, the world seems to be now in an even worse plight. [It is tragic, to realise that the world is again plunged into a more terrible war! (1940).] For the last war has rather increased the materialistic outlook on life, opened up new channels for exploitation, and led to the discovery of new and more dreadful weapons of destruction.

There has been in almost every nation a turning away from organized forms of religion, as many really good people

seem to have lost hope of the Christian Church as a vital force for bringing about the regenerated society they look for, or even for overcoming the forces making for war, hatred, and oppression. Because of its false associations, the very name "Christian" is shunned by many who are yet Christ-like in their life. In India the person of Christ is venerated, and His principles often followed by many thoughtful and religiously minded Indians, who yet would have nothing to do with organised forms of Christianity.

The Eastern nations have been impatiently striving for the birth of a new freedom, both in their internal social order, and in the removal of those political and commercial disabilities imposed upon them by the more aggressive civilisations of the West arrogating to themselves a superior and dominating position. And the professions by these "Great Powers" of a beneficent trusteeship (as in India), or of seeking to "civilize and uplift backward races" (as in Africa) are looked upon as a hypocritical cloak for exploitation. There is a spirit of alienation and often of bitterness in the mind of the East in its relation to the West.

Then again during these days the consciences of many have been stirred by the cruelty and injustice of colour and caste barriers. We see the sad results of these not only in international relationships, but wherever the different races are competing in civic, social and economic relationships. Sadder still, these false standards are often assumed as legitimate even within the Christian church, as if they were part of a divine order and that for the sake of peace and efficiency it is good that the different groups be kept apart without allowing any dangerous intermingling. Pride of colour and

caste has become so deeply rooted in us that even well meant acts of friendly approach are often spoiled by an unconscious air of patronising condescension. One is aware of the many difficult problems and thorny questions involved, but is that not a challenge for the follower of Christ to venture to face them in his own personal life and try to do his part?

In economic relations too, have we not allowed ourselves to be guided by the commonly accepted standards without sufficiently considering whether they are consistent with the teachings of Christ? Many are even doubting whether these teachings can have any practical application under modern conditions of economic development. But is the Sermon on the Mount merely a Utopian ideal? Are not its principles to be the guide and rule for Christ's followers here and now? Can it be right for any of them to hold capital, profit or property merely for themselves and their families, satisfying their conscience by doling out a pittance to their struggling neighbours? Among the early Christians, at least, their love of one another, springing out of a common devotion to their Lord and Master, seems, without any thought-out economic theories or prescribed rules, to have led them with a joyful spontaneity to distribute their goods according to the needs of each, "not one of them considering anything his personal property."

It was for such a practical application and a deeper personal experience of the life in Christ and the fellowship of love and the power for service springing out of it that we among many others were longing, and still long and strive. There had also been growing in us both a strange

longing for friendship with members of other races as we met a few of such and began to realise something of the supra-national character of the Kingdom of God, in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, East nor West, Black nor White. Many were sharing with us in these ideals and aspirations and yet we knew the practical realisation of them could only come as we made actual attempts corporately, in little groups, to set out on the path even when we could see but a step or two ahead, in the faith that, as we strive to be true to the light already given, fresh light and better ways will be made clear to us. Problems such as these must be in the minds of all, and many must have thought them out far more fully than we have; but something had to be done immediately.

Before the war one of us had formed intimate friendships with some students of different nationalities, upon whom he urged the need for definitely organising themselves into a supra-national brotherhood, so that not thinking merely in terms of their respective nationalities they might accept as the guiding principle of their lives the only true and lasting kinship, viz., that of the "Family of Christ." By the family of Christ we mean that living union of all who seek to act towards all men as their brothers in the consciousness that we are all children of the one Father as revealed in Jesus, who delighted to call himself the "Son of Man." Nothing came out of this at the time, and when the war broke out in 1914 the prospect of such a brotherhood seemed more gloomy than ever. One of us was at this time working as Resident



“ Periannan ” (S. Jesudason)



"Chinnannan" (Ernest Forrester - Paton.)

Medical Officer of the London Medical Mission in the heart of the City of London. The other (a final year Medical Student at the time) was living in a hostel in London (connected with the Student Christian Movement) where students coming from China, India and the Continent enjoyed a happy and homely fellowship together with British students, and it was here that the writers first met each other. Drawn together as friends and finding much in common in our ideals and struggles in life, we desired to share as much as possible with one another, and so shortly after this it was arranged that we should both live and work together in the London Medical Mission for the poor and sick. Here we learned to bring our difficulties and temptations and those of the poor among whom we worked, as well as our joys and aspirations, to our Master in united prayer. We received much inspiration by reading the lives of Francis of Assisi and Dr. Pennel of Bannu, both of whom in their different spheres had lived out similar ideals.

As we were contemplating working together in India, there was another problem we had to face. It was a rare thing whether in the Church or the State to find a European who would take the second place to an Indian. It seemed to have been an accepted principle that the former was born to rule and lead, and the latter to obey and follow. The one had everything to give and the other was only fit to receive. This attitude of the West to the East is certainly not one calculated to promote feelings of brotherliness and mutual respect. This is possible only where there is the open mind and

the genuine desire to find that which is best in those whom we seek to serve, so that we may learn and receive from them, as well as give to them what they may be ready to receive at our hands. True service, we felt, can only be rendered by those who have the humble spirit ever glad and willing to "wash the feet" of others, to take the second place, and so commend the real spirit which should move the follower of Christ and promote the work of reconciliation among men. India is prepared to welcome any who come in this spirit to serve her under Indian leadership. Mere platitudes which accept this principle in pulpit or on platform only will not do; it is the actual carrying of it out in practice that is essential. This may mean a revaluation of the accustomed standards of life and civilisation as well as much patient self-discipline (often a painful process) but the great task of gathering into one **family** the children of God scattered in the world demands nothing less than this. Hence the name of this Ashram-Christukula (Christ's Family.)

So much for the statement of the ideals which had been moving us. We felt that war was utterly opposed to Christ's teaching and we as His followers could not take part in it under any circumstances, but we hoped that by our working together we might be able to do something towards putting these ideals into actual practice. During our time in London and later while in joint charge of a mission hospital in Poona (India) we learned how the conventional system of a paid staff of superior and subordinate workers tended to

destory the spirit of comradeship in the sharing of a common purpose and of love among the workers themselves as well as towards the patients. In the service of the sick the humbler tasks of attending to the cleanliness and comforts of the patients when done in the right spirit might be a more effective witness to the love of Christ than the highly specialised services rendered by the surgeon. Mere scientific efficiency is not enough in itself and is actually less important than the right spirit, just as though we may have the faith to remove mountains yet without love we count for nothing. Out of this grew the desire that a group (or family) might be formed of those who, sharing in a common loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ and seeking to understand and love one another, might live together and corporately serve their fellowmen freely according to their varied talents. Those who took up this as a life call would necessarily give up any personal property, having their needs supplied out of a common fund which should also be held in trust for the service of the poor people around.

For the great majority of people the natural and the right thing is the married life and God has wonderfully ordained that men should co-operate in his creative work through the bringing up of children as members of His great family on earth, and hence the home is so sacred that it must have their first thought and devotion. There are others whose gifts and calling are for a celibate life — (Brahmacharium). To some rare few these the presence of God is so real that without depending on any human companionship they go

everywhere as wandering prophets or Sadhus of the Kingdom; for others their fullest life purpose can only be fulfilled in loving comradeship in a group of those likeminded with themselves, devoting their whole life and energies for the fulfilment of a God-given vision. Jesus has clearly defined His conception of such a spiritual family in Mathew XII—48-50. He has made this plain when He said that some had made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of God. (Matt. xix., 11 and 12), and His own life on earth is the best example. For some of these who seek to fulfil their mission in life in the intimate comradeship of a spiritual family, the permanent membership of the ashram family is intended. We fully realized that permanent membership under these conditions could not be lightly undertaken, as it could only come about through growing personal understanding and love resulting from the bearing and sharing together in the joys and sorrows, failures and successes of the common life and service. So we also welcome those who desire to come for shorter periods for one or two years, whether they come with the hope of later permanently joining the ashram family, or whether because of their other circumstances or obligations they can only be with us temporarily. These of course are not expected to make any decision as regards property or marriage, but share for the time being in the common life of the family*.

In any case we felt we should not ask any to make a decision to join permanently until they have been at the

*[Some of those who have been with us for a time and shared in the life and work have been married people who had temporarily made other arrangements for their families. We have also been greatly cheered by visits from friends who have come as a family though separate accommodation is provided for men and women.]

ashram for at least four years. We also hope and expect that after having been in the ashram for one year, some may be led to definitely enlist themselves as probationers, i.e. those who are trying their vocation, (for three years) and as such are being drawn closer into the family circle. By permanent members we mean those who have committed themselves to the ashram as a life call.

Men are often attracted to one another at first by each other's idealisms. As they live and work together in close contact they come to know more and more of each other's failings and angularities. This is a critical stage in fellowship. Have they the inner consciousness that they are children in the Father's house and that their disunion would wound His love? Have they had the experience of that wonderful suffering love of Christ that has forgiven them so much? If so, will they not also forgive one another and continue a love which will only grow deeper the more it forgives? This is why the basis of the ashram family (as expressed in the constitution) is personal loyalty (i. e. faith) and devotion to Jesus Christ. We do not enquire into a man's creed or theological views or church connection, as his real fitness and capacity for sharing in the ashram family will be made clear in the daily round of life. We also realize that the "Inner Light" illumines many honest souls who have not named the name of Christ, and such also we welcome to come and share in following the Light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

In putting our ideals into practice, we had the cordial help and advice of several of the leaders of the National

Missionary Society of India (which is a purely indigenous society, seeking to unite all Christian Indians in one common service for the extension of the Kingdom of God) and we decided to work in co-operation with that society, as it brought us into contact with others of similar ideals in different parts of India,

In February 1921 embodying the ideals expressed above, we drew up a constitution for founding an ashram and fixed upon Tirupattur in the North Arcot District of South India (about 140 miles south west of Madras City) as a suitable location. The word "ashram" represents a very ancient Hindu ideal of a forest settlement or religious community of those who amidst the beauties of nature and unperturbed by wordly distractions and ambition, devoted themselves to worship, meditation and philosophical research. We chose that word, not because we wished to transplant bodily this ideal and all the ways in which it found expression in old India into modern life and its changed requirements, but because we felt it expressed in a language understood by the people our oneness with them and our belief that whatever was beautiful and true in the past heritage of India should find its fulfilment and enrichment in the Kingdom of God,

It is now nearly 19½ years since we started. What has been accomplished so far? On the 7th March 1921 the two of us started together in rented buildings, part of which was equipped as a hospital, with a theological professor as our surgical assistant and a young lad as a male nurse. As the operating room was too much for the professor, he offered to undertake the work of the kitchen department, where he

succeeded somewhat better !. A few students and other young men, widely differing in talents, soon came to do their bit, and we had a gay family including at times a philosopher turning his hand to surgical dressings and assisting at operations, a law college professor washing dishes, and a bishop scrubbing the floor and sweeping cob-webs from the roofs. Although this little family had necessarily frequent changes of personnel and varied in numbers with sudden temporary influxes during college vacations, yet we are very thankful that our numbers have been always replenished according to the needs of the particular times. The normal number is about twenty ; several of them have stayed for periods of one to five years, and several of these have been fully qualified doctors or teachers. Ordinarily we do not take any as a regular worker unless he or she is prepared to stay for at least one year after a probationary period of about 3 months. There are now only three with us who definitely look forward to making this their life work, but we look forward with prayer and hope to others also joining us more permanently. Soon after starting we bought land about two miles from the town and began well digging and building operations. We shifted to the new place in 1922 and carried on our medical work in two thatched sheds. Now we have accommodation for about 65 beds for inpatients in a well built and well equipped general hospital besides a large outpatients department. We have also a large out-patient leper clinic.

The ashram is very beautifully situated on a plateau land encircled by hills. All round us are many small villages and isolated farmsteads. The people are chiefly agriculturalists, and as the ashram should develop to meet the varied needs of the people, we have a farm.

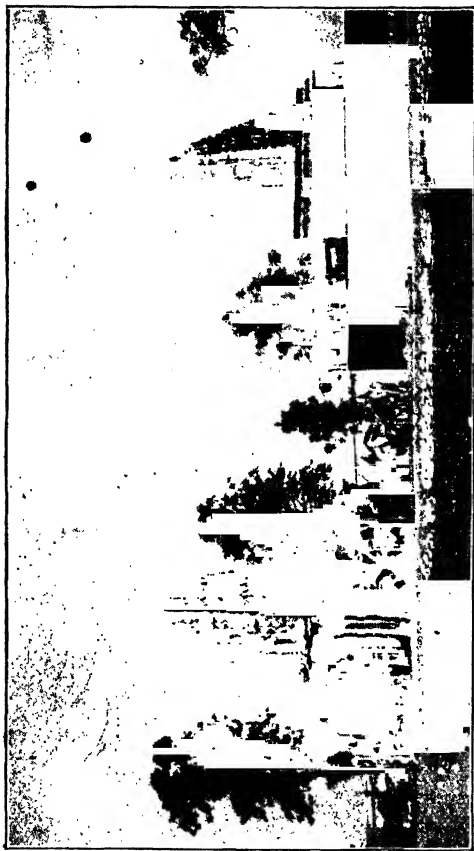
One brother supervises our agricultural lands, dairy and poultry sections. We are very thankful for having obtained a good water supply from our two large wells. The work on the farm, as well as that of putting up buildings and sinking wells has provided employment for a number of the poorer villagers. Many of them have been brought into contact with us in this way, and a few have come to know something of the message of Christ through the service which we hold for them every morning before they start work. We long for some agricultural expert to join us and make this part of the work to be of greater service to the villagers by demonstrating to them the value of improved methods. From the very beginning we felt the need for doing some form of educational work among the poor children and adults in the villages around. In May 1925 one of the brothers who had a love for village children started in a small thatched shed a small school for the very poor little depressed class children of an adjoining village. In the beginning the caste children of the neighbourhood did not attend this school but the school has since been growing not only in numbers but also in its influence on the villagers and a large number of caste children are studying in it along with depressed class children, the former freely mingling with the latter without any distinction. The school which began with about twenty children or so and was not recognised by the Government has now on its roll 140 pupils and has become recognised as a complete Higher Elementary School. We have just now completed a new building fitted (in addition to class rooms) with kitchen and dining hall for this school. The poor children

are given mid-day meal free. There is a weaving shed in which the boys learn bedtape weaving. They also do some gardening and grow vegetables. Two of our older school boys are doing cloth weaving. There are also three night schools conducted by our workers in three different villages near by.

Our daily life is regulated by a bell which according to our present programme wakes us up at 5 a.m. At 5-15 a.m. we assemble at our Jebalayam (House of prayer) for corporate worship. To develop an indigenous expression of our Christian witness, faith and worship, the Ashram has published a special Tamil song book (Ashrama Pamalai - garland of Ashram songs) containing 368 Tamil Lyrics bearing up on various devotional subjects and intended to meet the various spiritual needs of a Christian Baktha. To help us in entering into the full meaning of the hymns this book contains also brief biographical and other anecdotes concerning as many as we discovered to have a history behind them. The Ashram has also published a Jebamalai (garland of prayer and praise) - a Tamil prayer book containing an order of service based as far as possible, on indigenous modes of worship and expression. Both these are used during our morning worship though the use of the Jabamalai is optional. At the end of the corporate worship lasting about twenty five minutes we all spend about twenty minutes privately (but remaining in the Jabalaya itself) for Bible reading and private meditation and prayer and disperse after singing the "Mangalam" (Praise.)

The Jebalaya itself is a stone structure built in the plan and style of a South Indian Hindu temple with an entrance Gopuram (tower), rectangular walls enclosing a garden (for purposes of private prayer or meditation), small lotus water tanks and a main Mahamandapam (which forms the body of the church) -an open hall with terraced roof supported by a series of carved stone pillars. At the western end and on a higher level than the Mahamandapam is the "Moolasthanam" (or sanctuary) over which is built the second Gopuram surmounted by a cross on a "Kalasam" (the gilt metal globe that peaks the temple towers). Here in the Jebalayam we meet both for our morning worship and our sun-set Sandhya worship (the latter often being held in the garden outside the temple). This temple is a great attraction to our villagers, especially our hospital patients and their relations, who of their own free will come here for private prayer and worship and also sometimes join us during our times of corporate worship here. At 7 a.m. we meet again for Bible study or for the study on certain days of some matter of general interest biographical, historical etc. These classes are ordinarily conducted in Tamil the language of this part of India.

After our morning meal together (partaken of in simple Indian style), we go to our work whether in the hospital or farm or household or school. In the midst of the work at midday we break off for a few minutes of quiet silent prayer. The meal time which follows is often a very jolly one of fun and joking together, refreshing to the mind as well as to the body.



The Jebalaya viewed as a whole

In the afternoon there is some time for rest and then there are other duties such as letter-writing, the afternoon school followed by games or gardening with the children, besides the ever insistent calls from patients in the hospital to be attended to. In the evening we often contrive to get some time for recreation in the shape of gardening (vegetable growing), volley-ball or going out for walks together, or visiting our village friends and having a friendly chat with them. At sunset we meet together as a family and have a time of quiet for individual meditation or prayer. This time of worship during the twilight interval between the sunset and the appearing of the first stars has been observed from olden times in India as the evening 'Sandhya.' Often as we sit together in the cool of the evening watching the splendours of the sunset and the deepening tints on hill and cloud, all nature seems to invite us to adoration and worship. This time of meditation or prayer begins with a hymn followed by about 20 minutes of silent corporate meditation, private devotional reading or writing and finishes with another hymn. Following this we have our evening meal, and then, one or two of us meet with the patients and their friends in the open waiting hall, where we sing Tamil hymns set to Indian music, and try to explain in words to them Christ's love and power which we have been trying to translate in our service for them during the day. And pointing them to the great Physician, we invite them to join us as we pray that they may be healed. Whether by the spoken word (personally or in meetings) or by life and deed, every one is free to commend the gospel of Christ as he feels led to do. A number of other brothers go to teach in our three village night schools.

For the guidance of those wishing to Join the Family at the Ashram.

CHRISTUKULA ASHRAM,

(THE ASHRAM OF THE FAMILY OF CHRIST),

TIRUPATTUR, NORTH ARCOT, DIST.

[*South India.*]

We welcome to the Ashram all who share with us the general ideals, expressed in the pamphlets issued by us from time to time. They should have earnestly striven to know God's will and call for them. Especially in regard to their responsibilities to their parents and relatives, they should face the question whether they are really free to give themselves either temporarily or more permanently to this life of service in brotherly co-operation with the rest of the Ashram family.

Some may think of coming to the Ashram primarily with the hope of acquiring some benefit for their spiritual life. They may feel disappointed when they come unless they realize that we need their spiritual help as much as they feel they need ours. But we trust that if they come with the longing to give of the best that God has given them to the village people, and patiently to share with us in so doing, that their own lives as well as that of the family will be enriched. Some others may come with the hope of equipping themselves in other ways (by technical training etc.) for their life's work. To these latter we should explain beforehand that we do not give technical training or certificates of work done, such as would improve their prospects. We cannot therefore encourage them to come. We often invite students to come during

their holidays to see for themselves whether they may later on be able to come for more permanent service. As our accommodation is limited we can take only a few, and only such as are seriously trying to think out their future.

Whilst we wish that each should find a suitable outlet in service according to his talents or qualifications, all who come will also be expected to share in the humbler duties (such as sweeping, vegetable gardening, carrying patients, or bathing the school children etc.) realising that these tasks also can be done to the glory of God.

In order that each one who comes should have a chance of seeing if he can fit into this kind of life, and that we also may get to know him before the question of a longer stay in the Ashram is considered, we invite him to come and stay in the first place as a "Sevaka-Mithiran" (one who is a friend of the service). He shall ordinarily remain as a Sevaka-Mithiran for one month, after which the "Pradama-Sevak" (the chief servant) or another Sevak (a full member of the Ashram) shall have a talk with him about the desirability of his remaining for a further period and decide whether he shall be admitted as a "Sevaka-Apetchikan" (one who longs to serve, formerly known as a "Volunteer"). No one should stay as a Sevaka-Mithiran for more than three months except by special invitation.

No one shall ordinarily be admitted as a Sevaka-Apetchikan until he is twenty years of age. He shall be admitted in the first instance for one year and only one who intends to remain for that length of time may become a Sevaka Apetchikan. One who cannot speak Tamil fluently

celibacy and the giving up of personal property, for ten years in the first instance, with the solemn intention of making the Ashram his life-work.

We desire those coming to the Ashram to write to us first and in order that we and they may wait upon God to know His will, they are requested to wait until they have a definite reply from us.

The above rules do not apply to guests who come for short visits.

1—8—1940

S. JESUDASON.

E. FORRESTER-PATON.

CHAPTER II

An effort for the fulfilment of a vision of the Kingdom of God.

I

*An address given by Dr. S. Jesudason F.R. C.S.E., **Sevak** of the Tirupallur Ashram at the Annual Meeting of the National Missionary Society of India in Madras on the 18th of March, 1922.*

Once we asked Pandita Ramabai the meaning of the word Ashram. She told us it meant "Shelter" or "Home." The word Ashram and its historic associations are described by the poet Tagore in his own inimitable way thus :—"The forest sanctuary blossomed in India like its own lotus, under

a sky generous in its sunlight and starry splendour. India's climate has brought to us the invitation of the open air; the language of our mighty rivers is solemn in their chants; the limitless expanse of her plains encircles her homes with the silence of the world beyond; there the sun rises from the marge of their green earth like an offering of the unseen to the altar of the unknown, and goes down to the west at the end of day like a gorgeous ceremony of nature's salutation to the Eternal. In India the shades of the trees are hospitable, the dust of the earth stretches its brown arms to us, the air with its embraces clothes us with warmth. . . . , it urges us to seek for the vision of the infinite in all forms of creation, in the human relationships of love: to feel it in the air we breathe, in the light in which we open our eyes, in the water in which we bathe, in the earth in which we live and die. Therefore I know—and I know it from my own experience—that the students and teachers who have come together in this ashram (Shantiniketan) are daily growing towards the emancipation of their minds into the consciousness of the infinite, not through any process of teaching or outer discipline, but by the help of an unseen atmosphere of aspiration that surrounds the place and the memory of a devoted soul who lived here in intimate communion with God. . . . I warn my hearers not to carry with them any false or exaggerated picture of this ashram. When ideas are stated in a paper, they appear too simple and complete. But in reality their manifestation, through the materials that are living and varied and ever changing, is not so clear and perfect. We have obstacles in human nature and in outer circumstances. . . . Therefore it is absolutely necessary for their mental health and development that they should

not have mere schools for their lessons, but a world whose guiding spirit is personal love. It must be an ashram, where men have gathered for the highest end of life, in the peace of nature ; where life is not merely meditative but fully awake in its activities, where boys' minds are not being perpetually drilled into believing that the ideal of the self-idolatry of the nation is the truest ideal for them to accept, where they are bidden to realize man's world as God's Kingdom to whose citizenship they have to aspire : where the sunrise and the sunset and the silent glory of stars are not daily ignored ; where nature's festivities of flowers and fruit have their joyous recognition from man ; and where the young and the old, the teacher and the student sit at the same table to partake of their daily food and the food of their eternal life."

Now what we are out for is not to merely transplant this ancient and beautiful ideal and all the ways in which it found expression in ancient times bodily into modern life and its changed requirements. But in so far as the Spirit of Jesus Christ was manifest in these ideals it should be but just the natural thing for us in India to adapt these in the service of His Kingdom. In the spacious grounds which surround our temporary abode in Tirupattur there are many large trees under whose pleasant shades the villagers sit as they listen to the doctor on an out-patient morning, when he tries to impress upon their minds the evil of insanitary habits and their consequent diseases, and then points out to them Him, faith in Whom alone is of real value both in the healing of their bodies and in the transformation of their life and character, and while they remain silent he prays for them.

The family at the ashram is aimed to be a fellowship of likeminded souls inspired by a common devotion to a common head Jesus Christ, and united to one another by personal love. We desire to call no one in the ashram "the head" for we have one Head even Christ and all of us are brethren and if any be appointed to arrange the daily life of the family we call him "Sevak" (servant) that he might never forget that he is the servant of all. And when the Lord prayed that great high-priestly prayer before he left this earth, was it not through this vital union, between Himself, the Holy father, and the beloved disciples that He looked forward to the world believing in His Mission? "That they may be one; as, thou Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they may be all one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me." We believe that this untiy is essential both for the life and growth of the family in the Ashram and their witness bearing, not, mind you, uniformity of an outward form of life but an inward unity of spirit. Small though our company is we speak four languages and both Europe and Asia are represented in our family. We have been trained under four different denominations and yet another is an unbaptized disciple of the Lord Jesus. Meat eating and strict vegetarianism mingle freely in the family meals partaken together and outward dress is as varied as our needs and the needs of the work. Indeed a wandering Sadhu who strayed into our house one day was utterly disappointed at our outward garb and exclaimed in disgust "I thought that this was an Ashram but these be no sadhus at all!" As for views whether as regards Church or State we have had in the family Episcopalian (including a bishop who undertook the task of sweeping during his stay

with us) and Quaker, staunch loyalist and zealous non-co-operator rejoicing together in the fellowship of the children of God. .

What is our common ground and the nature of the bond that holds together the family ? It is a common devotion to our ever present though invisible Head and the love which He inspires one towards the other and towards those He calls us to serve. The Christian's life must be the source of His message. When in Galilee the Master called together that small group of disciples He aimed at a fellowship of which He was the Head—a nucleus of the Kingdom which was to replace all earthly kingdoms. Are we who call ourselves by His name in this land and in other lands honestly standing up to do our part for the fulfilment of His great purpose ? If not, is it fair to name ourselves after His name ? It is such a searching of hearts that led some of us to propose to the National Missionary Society of India that a fellowship and service of the kind begun at Tirupattur should be a part of its activities.

The early morning hours are devoted to private devotion. We have indeed often a sunrise so magnificent that I have been reminded of a story of the Persian magnate who taunted by a noble lady in England for the folly of the Easterners who worshipped the sun, readily replied, "Madam, if ever you were to see the sun you would worship him too!" During the quiet hours of devotion the New Testament (often a Gospel) is studied in private at first, and when summoned by a bell, or by the tune of a hymn played on an

organ, the family quietly assembles in a open hall in front of the house with no walls but a series of arches and a low parapet. Looking out through the arches and the many large trees that surround us to the eastern hills of the Javadi Range from behind which the sun is rising, one has the feeling of worshipping God in the freshness and the beauty of nature newly born. The family worship is absolutely informal and everyone leads it in turn. The passage that we have already read together in private is read and after the leader has given us some helpful thought the meeting is open for some minutes for anyone else who has a message to pass on to the others. Then after a short period of silence those moved to do so lead the family in prayer. Next follows the morning meal which like the other meals of the day is partaken together usually in the front verandah of the house. Now on to the day's work ! Once caught on by the machinery of the daily routine of work there is no knowing what may be expected of us before the day is done. Villagers have their own way of advertising things and they have been circulating such false and exaggerated reports about our powers of healing that we have been faced with the perplexing and distressing problem of a medical work that is growing too fast and out of proportion to the number of workers. As we employ no ward boys or compounders, and as all so called " menial work " such as carrying patients or cleaning vessels etc., is expected to be done by the family, our hands are usually full. Besides, although it is not yet even one year the confidence of the people is so great that our villagers usually so averse to surgical operation have come in considerable number to get operated on, and we have had many major operations including abdominal sections. The responsibility

and seriousness of undertaking such a work so soon after the opening of our work has naturally meant much anxious labour. But we feel bound to thank God in all humility for all the wonderful way He has helped us. Before every operation the patients' thoughts are directed to God and he is invited to join with us in prayer as we pray before the anaesthetic is administered and the same is done at the bedside as one is moved to do. If you realize that there are at present no trained workers at the ashram excepting the two medical men you will rejoice with us and thank God for those devoted temporary members and volunteers who have faithfully and enthusiastically helped us often toiling hard from morning till night and yet most willingly and cheerfully. We thank God for their sweet and inspiring comradeship in this service of healing. We have had a theological professor to help in a reduction of fracture holding forth till his nerves gave way. And then he was told off for duty at the kitchen where he did much better. We have had a retired tahsildar to file our out-patient tickets in an approved official way ! We have had Madras medical students ready both to assist at operations and to sweep the floor as necessary. A Law College Professor was told off to attend to the duty of washing the dishes but he complained that his more zealous comrades did not always give him the pleasure of fulfilling the task. Besides these we have had temporary members who join the family for a period of six months at a time and their help as far as the steady and systematic work is concerned is much more real. The N. M. S. Syrian committee sent us two such primarily for training for their greater future usefulness in the North Kanara Field of the N.M.S.

We have some lovely sunsets here ! It does one's soul a world of good to watch from some quiet spot at the end of the day's work, the sun as it quickly dips down behind the little hills of the west. And lo ! what radiancy of colours soon follow ! To attempt to describe them would be a failure. And as one watches that soul softening panorama of nature's own art and behind it the hand of the Divine Artist, one is lifted up above all that is paltry and mean above all that genders strife into that pure and calm atmosphere of the saints at rest in the bosom of their Beloved.

The golden evening brightens in the West,

Soon, soon to faithful warriors comes the Rest

Sweet is the calm of Paradise the Blest,

Alleluiah, Alleluiah,

The evening bell summons us for worship among the inpatients, and at 7 o'clock we squat down on the floor among the patients, and sing Indian lyrics. We tell them about Jesus, the motive power of the life and the work at the Ashram and then pray, often naming the sick one by one. After the evening meal, we often have a class for giving elementary instruction in medicine and surgery for the benefit of the "temporary members." We have tried to hold another class for "Bible study" for some similar object in the afternoon. But owing to the pressure of work or on account of weariness after work we have been not very successful about this class. This brings me to the most pressing need of the Ashram at the present time and this is that of more like-minded brothers and sisters to join the fellowship and service. But great and pressing as the need is, we pray most earnestly

not only that God may send us those whom He has called to join us but also He may keep away those whom He has not called. For even as every right addition is a source of inspiration and a tower of strength to the family, every wrong addition is a source of embarrassment and weakness. For let me make it clear once again that the Ashram is not a medical mission hospital as ordinarily understood. The fact that the medical work is taking such a large place in the service of the family is purely due to the fact that the two present members are medical men. If in God's good plan some day the membership of the family should so increase that it consists of a majority of men or women of different training and talents, the service would correspondingly of a different type. And let me say in this connection that when we speak of need let it be not understood wholly as needs of the medical part of our work. There is already the beginning of other forms of service. We have already an addition to the family from our Hindu neighbours in one little boy, a former in-patient whom the parents have handed over to us for bringing up and similar offers are being made by others.

There are children of God longing to find the fulfilment of the purpose and calling of their lives by uniting their lives in holy fellowship with others like-minded—longing to wed themselves to Christ and to His family that by such union there may be an abundant fruit-bearing to the glory of their Lord. First there must be the direct personal and individual call. Then the finding of their comrades, and as the result of the individual and the corporate life and its testimony, the fruit bearing.

" They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship in breaking of bread and in prayers. All that believed were together, and had all things in common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.....and the Lord added to the fellowship daily such as should be saved."

To create such an atmosphere—to attain such an ideal would seem well nigh impossible if we had not once and again heard the voice clear and firm ' My grace is enough for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness.' We are struggling hard for the fulfilment of a vision—the vision of the Kingdom of God. But I shall be guilty of the grossest exaggeration if I give the impression that we have attained to these ideal conditions. " Not as though we were already perfect, but we follow after if that we may apprehend that for which also we are apprehended of Christ Jesus, forgetting those things (our many failures) which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, we press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

CHAPTER III

II

Dr. S. Jesudason wrote as follows in the " Christian Patriot "
of 24th February, 1923.

Sometime ago you asked me to write an account of the Ashram for " the Christian Patriot." I then declined. But similar requests have come from elsewhere. After much

thought and with the consent of my brother, I write the following and I feel I must first send it to you.

It is not an easy matter to do so. In the first place we made it a sacred rule that should not be broken that none of the members of the family shall do anything that savours of advertising the Ashram. In the second place it is very hard to express fully in writing (without being misunderstood) the life and work of a group of people who are just striving to bring into being an ideal or rather a vision of the Kingdom of our Lord—a vision that has been growing with their own growth in things of Christ. On the other hand there is this question—how are we to get into fellowship with those who in their own corner are striving after similar ideals and longing to join those of a like mind? However I have decided to write this for your paper according to your request.

The Ashram, or this home of service is still in its infancy, although its beginnings must be traced to the beginnings of the spiritual life of its present members. To one of them the life of St. Francis of Assisi was a great source of inspiration and enthusiasm in the days of his boyhood. But then neither the Ashram nor its present constitution is based upon Franciscan ideals pure and simple. While one of the fundamental principles of the Franciscan ideal was the non-possession of property even as an order or a society (quite apart from the question of individual ownership) this Ashram is equipped as a hospital and therefore has to own lands and buildings. St. Francis put before the world the vision of a saint and apostle desiring to follow literally the earthly life of our Lord—a life of absolute renunciation of all earthly pos-

sessions. In the life of our Lord there is no institutional work figuring prominently. He taught in no special building neither did He resort to scientific methods of treating the sick. But here we are dealing with drugs and operating instruments.

But then, is there any way by which the Christ ideal—that of St. Francis and the Sadhu—could be brought to bear upon modern institutional work? It will be a gross exaggeration to say that the present members of the Ashram practice the absolute self renunciation of either the Sadhu or the Franciscan. A man can be a celibate and yet full of worldly attachments. The robe of a sadhu may cover a very worldly and selfish mind.

The Protestantism of Europe (especially of the Continental type) has such a horror of the recurrence of "Popery" that it is alarmed at the suggestion of a call to celibate life on the part of any of its members. Not all my powers of reasoning could convince a German lady (the wife of a Lutheran Pastor) at Berlin that God does call even in these days men to a celibate life for His service.

The troubles of European Christendom need not decide the destinies of the Indian Church, and Indian Christianity need have no quarrel either with Rome or Augsburg or Canterbury. The Christian who feels within himself the power of a great God-given vision must not allow the trammels of an ecclesiastical tradition so to override him as to damp his ardour, and kill the very object of his mission in life. "Whatsoever things are true" must be laid hold of in the evolution of his own spiritual life and in the service of

his Lord's Kingdom. There are in every age of the history of the Church of Christ those whom He calls for an unmarried life for some very definite purpose in the service of their generation. St. Paul was called very definitely to lead such a life for the great work of "turning the world up-side down" for the triumph of the Cross of Christ. St. Francis was raised to revolutionise a corrupt church and a corrupt society of his day. And there must be even today those who burn with an ideal, and for the fulfilment of that ideal decided to keep themselves free from all mere human ties.

Europe seems ever on the top of a volcano of war and bloodshed owing to her selfish greed and diplomatic intrigues. Asia seems only half awake from her age long lethargy, and poor Africa is down in the dust. The Gospel of Christ is being preached in a sort of way but seems unavailing as the life of those who profess Christianity does not bear any witness to its power. Is it possible to revive once again the simple, unalloyed fellowship of the great Galilean Teacher and His devout disciples, as they lived and worked together nearly two thousand years ago? Is the Sermon on the Mount to remain a mere impracticable idealism, or is it to be the uncompromising regulator of one's daily life and practice? Could it be indeed practised by any community on earth today? Have the modern day complications of a so called civilisation made impossible for any group of Christians to practice that love and unselfish holding of property in common (as a trust for distribution to the needy) that characterised the early apostolic Church? And in these days of national selfishness and pride—when men seem to see their neighbour only in one of their own tongue and colour—even

now is the love of Christ a strong enough bond to make some rise above that clannish feeling and realise their kith and kin in all who share the love of their common Master and Lord? Such were some of the heart searching questions that lie at the root of the beginnings of the Ashram and fellowship.

And to those who, burdened with similar heart searchings and moved by similar ideals, are looking out for comrades in union with whom they long for their own lives to be amplified and made more fruitful, the members of the Ashram hold out their hands in loving welcome. It will be obvious "for the present distress" that for any permanency in such a fellowship unmarried life is a necessity. Therefore it is laid down in the constitution that *permanent* members should be unmarried. They should give up all personal property, but are quite free to dispose of their possessions in any way they like. What they decide to give to the Ashram goes towards a "common fund". [The Composition of the Board of Trustees has not been finally settled yet—for the present Brother Paton and I jointly act as trustees of the property and the common fund.—S.J. 1-8-1940.]

Now no fellowship or friendship could be made to order. It must be a growth through loving personal intimacy. I am learning more and more that the secret of true and lasting fellowship is the secret of (or rather the grace for) forgiving one another. For to *For Give* is to—*give much, i. e., to love*. Hence it is laid down in the constitution that no one shall be elected to permanent membership, excepting after a period of at least four years' continuous stay at the Ashram.

But then there will be men and women, who while unable to satisfy the condition of permanent membership, are still anxious to devote a short period of their life in this fellowship and service. To meet such a need, provision is made in the constitution for the admission of *temporary* volunteers who decide to come and share the life of service of the Ashram for six months. These may after this period (if members and they agree,) continue longer up to three years. Of course when they are at the Ashram they conform to the common life of the Ashram. We have had several temporary volunteers in the past with us who have been a great help and inspiration to us.

Then again, we have had several who have been with us for shorter periods as visitors.

Thus the family is constituted. All are expected to do any form of service however "menial" or humble, such as sweeping or cooking, carrying patients, etc. As members of the family are drawn from different parts of India (literally from the Punjab to Tinnevely) the common language is English.* Both Europe and Asia are represented although at present we are only a very small family.

The Ashram is not attached to any denomination. The only condition of membership is "FAITH IN AND DEVOTION TO JESUS CHRIST." Members may belong to

*The growth of the work in accordance with the needs of the environments has made a knowledge of *Tamil* essential for the workers. Also the principle of indification with the people numerarily demands a good knowledge of *Tamil*. Hence the common language for the Ashram family is now *Tamil*. One of the *Tamil* brothers acts as *Tamil* teacher to those not proficient in this language.— 6-8-1940. S. J.

any nationality but they shall consider themselves as citizens of the Kingdom of God, placing loyalty to Christ above everything.

At the same time this is not an attempt to start any new sect, rather it is an attempt to unite in loving fellowship and service members of all Christian denominations, moved by common ideals of service for the advent of the Kingdom of their Lord.

At present the only two permanent members are medical men and the only form of service possible for them is naturally medical. But it is earnestly expected God will bring into this fellowship others gifted with different talents, who will find here ample scope for developing new forms of service other than medical.

Just now we are engaged in supervising building work and the medical work is confined to only emergencies and some out patients. About twenty acres of land have been secured on an elevated spot surrounded by hills, at a distance of about $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles from the small town of Tirupattur. We find our main work at present is to establish a Christian relationship with the many labourers who are working in the constructing of building, etc. It is not an easy matter. We commence the day with our family worship, and then at 8 a.m., we have a service for all the labourers when we sing our familiar Indian lyrics and tell them the story of Jesus. After this our day is spent at present mostly among labourers directing and supervising the work. As I have already said we are doing a certain amount of medical work also. But we have only one small cottage and a few

thatched sheds and the convenience necessary for medical work is very limited indeed. An elderly Christian gentleman with experience of building work has come as a volunteer and he is a great help. God has indeed been very good to us, and has given us literally such "daily bread"* as the demands of the service needed.

May God graciously pardon whatever I have said above that savours of boast as though we have attained to anything of a superior spiritual order. God knows and our hearts tell us how miserable our failures have been. Yet trusting in that grace that is enough for us and the strength that is made perfect in our weakness, we strive after that for which we have been laid hold of by CHRIST JESUS. And what a joyous strength it is to feel there are many who support us by their prayers!

CHAPTER IV

III

Dr. S. Jesudason spoke as follows at the annual meeting of the N. M. S. held in Madras on the 18th August, 1923.

When the Lord was here upon earth and gathered round Him a small band of disciples and when at last He ascended upon high with hands up-raised in blessing, He left behind a Christian Society remarkable for its simplicity. But there are two factors intricately interwoven into the framework of modern society and to most of us at least, they

*Comrades in Service.

are factors interwoven into our life and service. We cannot escape them whether we like them or not. How far they help us to attain the object of our life and how far they hinder the same, even a careful analysis does not clearly reveal. These two factors are ORGANISATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS. To most of us at least trained from our early childhood in the usual modern accepted fashion through both these methods, it is not only natural but almost the only possible way, humanly speaking, to express our life and service to the greatest advantage through organisations and institutions. I do not forget there have been spiritual giants who have "turned the world upside down" and revolutionised the society of their day without the aid of any great committees or councils or pulpits or cathedrals. What for example was behind Paul and Silas at Philippi or Thessalonica, when even the agents of the imperial power of Rome became troubled at the sight of these men who were accused of "turning the world upside down"? With just the bare message of the Gospel of Christ saints of God have faced terrible opposition and through faith "have subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, (of whom the world was not worthy) they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

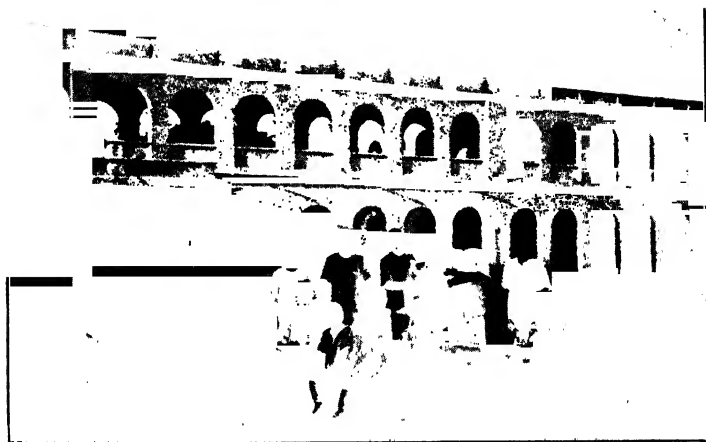
I am talking about these things because these are problems that we have to face every day in our work at Tirupattur at the present moment. At first thought it might seem

that men committed to the life of celibacy, may find life and its problems very simple of solution. They have no family to maintain—no “*Samsaharam*” to worry about. Why then, they should be able just to steer clear through smooth waters with sails up, and a favourable wind nicely speeding them along. No, that is a most misleading dream. Friends who have been watching the growth of the Ashram closely from its beginning with enthusiastic interest, know very well (and rightly sometimes with doubt and fear), how ever-increasing has been our “*Samsaharam*”—that great ocean of family and institutional cares. Let me give you some examples.

Take the building work. Now you know very well—hospital work means building—“pucca” buildings too, well planned, carefully laid out and built with real good materials, and drugs, instruments, almirahs, chairs, tables, cots, etc., etc., unless you wish to play with human lives! And when you decide to build a hospital, you have also to build the houses where those who work must live. And they must also have a place for common family gatherings and worship. And when you have to spend money and build “pucca” buildings, it is no special virtue to make them purposely ugly in order not to look too attractive or imposing (as some of the Christian denominations are accused of doing!). Neither is there any virtue in piling up buildings “like a series of match boxes” as a friend described his first impressions of a certain country in the west which I need not name! So we feel that Indian art, so long neglected, should find at least some room even in our little corner at Tirupattur. Now perhaps some of you are reminded of that story of that much worried ascetic *Pandaram*. The poor man had only a piece of rag which



The Mandapam (Open Hall) in front of the Ashram Hospital
(workers and some patients)



“ Suganilayam ” (Abode of Health)
The new block of The Ashram Hospital.



was eaten away by a rat. So he kept a cat, and to feed the cat with milk, he had to get a goat, and to look after the goat, he had to keep a boy, and for the boy to live in, he put up a shed. And so the story goes how the *pandaram* who had renounced the world fell all unconscious into a net of worldly cares ! Not long ago, we visited a "sanyasi" dwelling in a cave on one of the hills not far from the Ashram. The poor old man died some months ago. I have never met a more worried man. He had collected bricks for repairing the entrance to his cave, but nobody advanced him money to complete his work. He had sunk a well, but he had not a decent bucket to draw the water with. He was hungry and without a sheet to cover himself with, but "people now-a-days did not care for Sadhus !" and so on he related to us his mournful tale though in a pleasant manner.

Whether married or unmarried, most of us have to live and work in a social order which does not exempt any of us from the cares of this life : unless, indeed, we absolutely refuse to take interest in or work shoulder to shoulder with the rest of our fellows.

We have to deal with an avaricious land owner or a careless mason, with a lazy carpenter or an unreasonable stone-mason. We have to deal with patients who come at any time for non-urgent reasons and who persist in even peering through your bath-room window in order to be attended to immediately ! Or with well-to-do patients who try to get everything they can from the Ashram, without moving even a little finger to help the service of their poor fellow-sufferers. We have to prayerfully and disinterestedly

decide about applications for admission into the family at the Ashram ; careful not to increase the problems by admitting those who do not understand the aims and ideals of the service. All these things have made us feel that the one great pressing need of our modern-day life is the urgent need for quiet. Our Lord's life was one of incessant activity alternating with seasons of quiet on the mountain tops or in the deserts. It is said that that great soul-Mahatma Gandhī -- spends one day every week in absolute silence. And if we cannot find time to be quiet, we must *make* time to be quiet. In addition to morning and evening quiet times, at 12 mid-day the prayer bell goes and all workmen are asked to stop their work for ten minutes to be quiet, and the members of the Ashram family all retire to some quiet spot and remain silent during that period. In addition, on certain fixed days, the members in turn observe a day of silence until the mid-day silence is over. These periods of quiet and silence have proved of very great help—just a pause as we go along to realize the presence of God to examine ourselves and to set right what has gone wrong or to do some devotional study.

A friend wrote to us the other day enquiring how many converts we have made. He added that his enquiry was not due to mere inquisitiveness but a real desire to find out how far our methods of Christian work were really successful. You may ask the same question. The answer depends upon what we mean by "making converts"! You may ask the minister of a church how fast the membership in his church is growing. His answer will depend upon his conception of what church membership stands for. Or you may enquire of any real Christian fellowship how fast its membership is

increasing. Are we out for creating a new "caste" or a community? When the Lord was here upon earth He gathered round Himself a small fellowship of disciples who were to be "the salt of the earth." Are we to aim at anything less? If we do so will it satisfy the mind of the Master?

. At the present moment two Hindu young men are earnestly pleading to be baptised but we are prayerfully explaining to them the need on their part to consider everything and count the cost before taking such a decisive step. We are anxious that they should be quite clear in their own minds as to the full significance of that step. Both of them according to our advice are going to try their best to explain to their parents the nature of the step they are about to take. For the love of Christ should make us not less but more dutiful and loving to those who have done so much for us on earth.

III

From an address delivered at the Kolagiri Missionary Conference in May 1925 by Dr. E. Forrester Paton, B.A., M.B., Ch. B. (Cantab).

At the very outset I feel I should explain to you that when I try to speak about Ashram Aims and Ideals, it is not of the ancient Hindu Ashrams nor yet of modern ashrams in India that I have to speak, for of both of these I must confess that I know exceedingly little. But it is rather of a method of service for the Kingdom, to which Dr. Jesudason and I feel that we have been led on, and which we are trying to work out in an institution at Tirupattur, which for conveni-

ence we have called an Ashram, that I wish to speak to you. And if during the course of my talk, you find things in our ideals for that institution which you may feel to be contrary to the spirit of the ancient Hindu Ashrams, you must forgive our mistakes ; and further if there are elements in ancient or modern ashrams which you feel might be incorporated in our work we shall be glad to have your suggestions, always bearing in mind that we should not slavishly follow the past nor take up a way of life simply because it is Indian, but rather should seek to take that which has been real value in the religious life of Indian in former days and see how it can be transformed and used by the Spirit of God for the service of the Kingdom. Again I must ask you to excuse so many personal references, and I propose not to speak of aims and ideals in the abstract but to try to trace out how these aims and ideals were borne in upon us step by step.

The Ashram was really born out of a personal friendship between Dr. Jesudason and myself, which started about ten years ago when he was a doctor working in a city medical mission in Endell Street, London, and I was a final year medical student. But even some years before that time, there had been in Dr. Jesudason's mind the idea of an International Christian Brotherhood which had been stimulated by friendships with students of a number of different nationalities. I too had been prepared for it by friendships with Indian and Chinese students and by happy fellowship together in the East and West Hostel started by the Student Movement in Hampstead.

It was through this friendship of ours that it came to pass that we offered and were sent together, to a Mission

Hospital in Poona under the United Free Church Mission. During our work there, the need for the joyful co-operation of the East and the West in the service of the Kingdom was again and again impressed upon us, and the hindrances to such joyful co-operation under foreign missionary organisations became increasingly clear to us. During this time we also came into contact with some of the leaders of the National Missionary Society and we felt that under it we might more happily be able to serve together on an equal footing. It testifies too to the supra-national spirit in that society that they were willing to accept me along with Dr. Jesudason as missionaries of the society.

Thus the joyful co-operation, in the service of the Kingdom of those of different races and nationalities on the basis of friendship, in Jesus Christ, was the ideal which was first brought home to us and which we have been seeking to work out in the life of the Ashram. Almost as a corollary of this came the sense of the artificiality and the tragedy of all the denominational barriers and differences among the servants of the Kingdom. Such a feeling is of course very widespread and, I imagine, comes to almost all who join in Student Movement Camps and similar gatherings. In India these differences are often most artificial as well as being unintelligible to the Hindu and Mohammedan public. We had experienced too the extraordinary oneness and fellowship in spiritual things that exists among spiritually minded men, quite independent of their particular profession or creed. So it came about that in framing our draft constitution, we put down simply, "Faith in, and devotion to Jesus Christ" as our basis of membership. And in practice we

ask no questions about a man's creed, though we do try to find out through friends, before accepting anyone into the family, what his previous life has been. In the end the real test of character is found only as we mingle together in the daily round of life and work. So it comes about that we had, and also have now with us, men brought up in many different denominations, as well as one who was not a member of any of them. We have not seriously confronted as yet the problem of the Roman Catholic Church, though we have had with us a visitor for several weeks a young Roman Catholic who shared in our fellowship. For the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper we invite any ordained friend, whom we love and respect, of whatever denomination he may be, to celebrate the sacrament with us in the manner he is accustomed to. So naturally we have no fixed ritual and in general our meetings for worship are of the most simple and informal nature, with as a rule some short period of silent waiting upon God. We have not felt that the bringing together in this way of those brought up in very different forms of worship has in any way lessened our spiritual fellowship but rather deepened it.

When Dr. Jusudason and I joined the National Missionary Society they contemplated our starting a mission hospital on more or less conventional lines ; but after our experience of the working of the mission hospital in Poona we found that much of such work was rendered ineffective by a staff of compounder, nurses and ward-boys who often did not share in the spirit of love and service for the patients. There is no work done for the love of Christ that can be reckoned unimportant, far less menial, and especially is it so in a

hospital where the patients are usually more dependent upon (and influenced by) the kindness and attentive care of nurses, dressers, compounders and ward-boys, than by the work of the doctor or surgeon. So we were prayerfully considering how a group of persons might be brought together, animated by the desire to show forth the love of Christ in the service of their fellowmen, each taking that part of the work most suited to his ability and none considering any work to be menial or beneath his dignity. Thus we sought to eliminate servants and a paid staff altogether, hoping that one might be found who would join with us and do even the work of a sweeper out of love for Christ. In practice except in the actual work of the hospital we have not been able to realise this as yet, for we have a paid sweeper and also a dhobi and a kitchen boy, besides two or three more who are looking after the cattle and the agricultural work. But we seek to be always ready to do our part in these works too as occasion requires. I can remember very well, one day when the sweeper did not turn up, a young Brahmin enquirer who was with us, setting to work along with a Syrian Christian and cleaning all the hospital bedpans.

It was in some such way that we came to conceive of a family of the followers of Christ living together and seeking to draw their fellowmen into vital touch with Christ by, first, a life of prayer and dependence upon God, secondly, love one to another, and thirdly, a life of selfless service; these are three pillars on which we seek to build, though all the time conscious of how far we fall short of realising them.

Again it became very clear to us that the usual system of salaried workers in mission service puts the emphasis on,

and gives prominence to, quite the wrong motive, which if it is allowed to grow in the mind of any worker must inevitably destroy the higher motives with which he may have set out and must render his service valueless for the Kingdom of God. Too often it leads also to an official relationship and even jealousy between fellow-workers; not to mention the fact that to the non-christian, mission-philanthropic work loses half its value as he looks upon it merely as another paid service something akin to Government service. And further because in this land of poverty Christians have as a rule set up a false social standard in dress and living, often quite beyond their means (copied largely from their more fortunate Western teachers) false motives for seeking to join the Christian fold and false ideas of the very content of the Christian message have become only too general among non-christians. How far divorced is the average christian attitude towards money and private property from that of Him who though He was rich yet for our sakes became poor and Who taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive! So in the ashram we sought to introduce in a modified way the early Christian method of a Common fund out of which the simple needs of the family might be met, as God supplied and according to the necessities of each; these needs being looked after by a 'sevak' appointed for this purpose every three years, larger outlays being made only by the unanimous desire of the members. Permanent membership in the ashram implies the giving up of any money or private property either to relatives or to the Ashram common fund or for any other purpose exactly as the individual joining feels best. This of course does not apply for those who come and join us for only shorter periods of a few

months up to three years. They share in the family meals and shelter, and simple clothing and other things are supplied to them according to their necessity, but there is no salary. For this reason these temporary members of the family have come to be called volunteers. The necessities of those who join us with the intention of devoting their whole life to this service are looked after in the same way, and they are not asked to give up money or property or to take part in the management of the common fund until they have been with us for at least three years after which they with the unanimous desire and approval of the members may take on the vow of membership. The common fund is also replenished by free-will offerings, but we made it a rule that there should be no advertisement for funds and we do not promise to give any account for money so given.

We felt too that permanent membership should be only for such as have felt the call to an unmarried life, and who are longing for fellowship with those likeminded in union with whom they would find their own lives and service more fruitful. This too we felt would tend to the solidarity of the family and unity of purpose unfettered by other interests. Let no one imagine that we are preaching celibacy, but we do feel that ever since the time of Christ there have been those who felt the call to remain unmarried in order to wholly consecrate themselves to some particular form of service, that is who have made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake.

It is far too soon to try to estimate the value or results of this way of life and service which we have been trying to follow. But we feel that we must record with deep gratitude

and thankfulness to God the wonderful way in which volunteers have come forward and just in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of the work in hand. And we have to thank God too for those whom He has sent, such men with whom we feel it has been a real privilege to live and share in the work. It is true that none have as yet definitely decided to give their lives permanently to this service, and most of those who have been with us have only been able to stay for comparatively short periods, but several have now been in the family for over two years, and there are one or two others who are 'permanent' with us in spirit if not in body ! The numbers have naturally varied a good deal, but have been gradually increasing so that at present we are thirteen including our two boys "Samuel" aged 17 and Manappan aged about 5. It has been a very happy family too, for all have joyfully done their part not of compulsion but out of freewill.

So far our service have been largely limited to medical work within the Ashram, and the work of the hospital with an average of 20 to 25 in-patients goes on in spite of the absence of a paid or fully trained staff. A few months ago one of our volunteers started a day-school for the little children of the surrounding huts and villages, and more recently a night school has sprung up and already shows vigorous signs of life and development, and we are praying that such work may go on and increase. There is also about 40 acre of land round the Ashram under cultivation through the labour of the villagers and with the help of the Agricultural Demonstrator ; and all of us try to put in a few hours a week tilling the soil and growing vegetables. But we are

earnestly hoping that some one who has had an agricultural training may join the family and develop this side of the work so that we might be able to have a demonstration farm and help the villagers to introduce better methods of agriculture and so seek to mitigate their ever present problem of getting sufficient food. There is also much work to be done in teaching them the value of co-operation and in improving the social and hygienic life of the villages generally.

The work of evangelisation is being carried on both in our services for the patients and also by individual talks and prayer with them as any of us feel led. But we long for the day when there may be those with us who will feel it their call to go two by two among the villages to serve them in whatever way they may be able and present the gospel just as they may be led, coming back to the Ashram every now and again for times of rest and refreshing.

These are all ways of service which we but dimly see at present, but to the development of which we earnestly look forward as God sends men who feel the call to share in the fellowship of the family and qualified for such work. But there is a still greater need ; every work must naturally be one sided without the presence and co-operation of women, really devoted women, who feel the call to set their lives apart for such service. Ever since the beginnning of the Ashram we have been looking forward to a band of women workers being formed in association with the Ashram and co-operating in the work. A few ladies have already helped us, and we know of one or two who are willing to come and work here more permanently. But in order that this side of the Ashram may grow in a natural and healthy way we feel

that the ladies themselves must find a leader of mature Christian experience, whom they would love and respect as an elder sister and who would help and direct them in their work and comfort and encourage them in their troubles and difficulties.

The future in such a way of life can never be all clear and distinct. But we trust Him who has led us thus far that He will still lead us on, and show us yet fuller and wider visions; and we would go forward in that confidence, and yet with fear and trembling lest we, in our haste or self-centredness, should mar the plan that He, the Master-Builder, is seeking to work out.

THE "CHRISTU-KULA-ASHRAM"*

An Experiment in Christian Community Life.

By E. FORRESTER-PATON.

The "Ashram" Ideal

The idea of a community setting themselves apart for a life of religious worship, devotion, meditation, is found in some of the earliest traditions of religion in India. Men, impelled by the sense of God as the one enduring reality and by their longing to experience more of Him, withdrew from the distractions of common life (sometimes alone, sometimes with their families) and settled down in little groups far away in the forest or by some river side. Here they lived in the simplest possible way, devoting all their energies to the quest

* An article written for the "Student World" (W.S.C.F.) July 1928.

for God. Such hermitages were called ashrams. Some of these became noted as places where the peace and joy of the presence of God could be 'felt,' and so, attracted to them by this fact and by the fame of some saintly religious teacher or 'Guru,' young men would leave their homes to spend several years as the disciples of the guru, who would live and move with them in closest intimacy treating them as his own children, and sharing with them his knowledge and religious experience. So the 'Guru-Kula' or 'Family of the Guru' arose.

There has been a recent movement in India to revive this ancient ideal and adapt it to more modern needs. Many must have heard of "Shantiniketan," Dr. Tagore's ashram, and of Mr. Gandhi's ashram at Sabaramati. Recently several groups of Christians also have been trying to glorify Christ by starting such ashrams, and of these our little group at Tirupattur, which we call "Christu-Kula-Ashram" (Family-of-Christ Ashram) is one.

The actual beginning of this ashram was made only seven years ago, but the thoughts which inspired it grew up from up a friendship formed in 1915 between Dr. Jesudason and myself (I being but a medical student at the time) and we also look forward to its growing, and to other groups being formed out of similar friendships. One of us had found much inspiration from the life of St. Francis of Assisi, and for the other there was the longing to identify himself with the people to whom he felt called to commend the gospel of Christ. But it was something far deeper than merely a similarity of ideals which drew us together as friends, and that, we feel, was the love of Christ.

The Basis of the Experiment.

The basis for our life as a community we conceived under three heads :

First, faith in, and devotion to Jesus Christ. It is our purpose to live a life of dependence on God as revealed in Him, and to let Him work out His purposes in and through us. In Him there is neither East nor West, and so we seek that members of different nationalities, cultures and communities in their common devotion to Him may be united in our group. In this way, in a world torn asunder by racial animosities we strive to witness that Christ is the one in whom all may be brought together. Thus the joyful co-operation in the service of the Kingdom of those of different races and nationalities on the basis of friendship in Jesus Christ, is the first ideal which we have been seeking to work out in the life of the Ashram. As a corollary to this came the sense of the tragedy of all the denominational differences among the servants of the Kingdom. We have experienced the extraordinary oneness and fellowship in spiritual things that exists among men seeking after God, quite independent of their particular profession or creed. Therefore we ask for no creedal test, but only that those with us may share in a common devotion to our one Lord, and in serving Him. We also realise that the "Inner light" illumines many honest souls that have not named the name of Christ, and such also we welcome to come and share in following the Light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

A Fellowship of Intercession.

Our worship is very simple, and usually includes some period of silent waiting upon God. We also realise that

variety is necessary to suit different temperaments. Thus in the early morning at 5 a.m. we meet and sing together one or more Indian chants of adoration and aspiration. Then, after a short silence and the Lord's Prayer, we separate for the morning period of individual study, meditation and prayer, during which time we all try to help one another by observing silence. Then before morning food we have a time of united devotional study of the Bible. At midday we are called together again from our various activities for a short time of united intercession, as a guide to which different general topics are chosen for each day of the week. We also observe evening "Sandhya"—that is, the time between the setting of the sun and the appearing of the stars, set apart for individual meditation and worship. Often as we sit alone in the cool of the evening, watching the splendours of the sunset and the deepening tints on hill and cloud, all natures seems to move us to praise and adoration; and when, at times, we have been disturbed by the strivings and turmoil of the day, God speaks His word of peace in our hearts. Then, at night before we separate for rest, we have a hymn and parting prayer together. So far concerning the devotional side of our life.

A Sharing of Life and Service.

Love one to another we take as the second guiding principle of our common life. Often it is far easier to love those whom we seek to serve than just joyfully to bear and share with our comrades in the daily round, and grow at the same time in mutual love and understanding; and for lack of this very thing how many great and noble undertakings have been marred! This growing love, we felt must spring from

a growing experience of that wonderful suffering love of Christ which is forgiving us so much. We seek to express our unity and love by sharing in common our worldly goods, and by our unity and love by sharing in common meals together and by our willingness to help one another in every possible way.

Many have been coming to share with us in the life and work for a period, whose family or other circumstances, however, made it impossible for them to adopt this as a permanent way of life; we call them "volunteers." It is upon these that our little group has been largely dependent, and it is by them (most of them young men) that the greater part of the service has been carried on, and the family life been enriched. Whilst they are with us they share all the life and activities of the family, which on its part makes all necessary provision for them according to our simple way of life.

The "Rule" of the Ashram.

Those who desire to become permanent members are expected to stay with us for a preliminary period of three years, so that we may be able to grow in friendship and understanding of one another and that they may find out whether the Ashram life is God's call for them. At present it is only Dr. Jesudason and I who have definitely committed ourselves to the Ashram as a life work. As permanent members, we give up all private property, in whatever way seems best to each (i.e. to relatives or to any others who may require help, or to the Ashram itself, all money so received being put into the common fund); and also we agree to remain

unmarried. These are not steps to be lightly undertaken, but we felt that they are necessary for the fullest and deepest growth of the Christu-Kula life in the Ashram.

We have also been greatly cheered by many visitors who have helped us in various ways. Many young men also have come to us during their school or college vacation, either to assist us in the activities of the Ashram, or to receive inspiration for their future usefulness in life.

The common fund above referred to is also replenished, from freewill offerings from those specially interested in the Ashram (but we seek to avoid any advertising for funds) ; also from thank-offerings from patients, and to a certain extent from the produce of our agricultural work. This fund meets all our household expenses, as well as the cost of buildings, and the equipment and running expenses of the hospital, school, and any other forms of service we undertake. We have had no difficulties so far through lack of funds.

A simple way of life in dress and food comes almost naturally, and especially so as we are living in the midst of villagers, whose simplicity of living (two very meagre meals a day is all that most of them can afford) is out of dire necessity. Our common meals (for which we all sit down on the floor and eat with our fingers in simple Indian style) are often times of much good-humoured laughter and fun; and how much a keen sense of humour does to help us on in life ! We had hoped in the beginning to do without paid servants altogether, and we still hope that some brothers may come who will feel it their call to do the cooking, or the washing of the clothes or even the scavenging (as, by the way, they

do in Mr. Gandhi's Ashram): but up to now we have been obliged to have paid servants for these duties.

A Service of Love.

Love to one another is intimately bound up with the service of neighbours (the villagers) which we take to be the third leading motive for our lives. To Jesus we look to learn that spontaneous, self-forgetting and truly humble service, and that love which sees and understands the heart aches of others, and can meet their deepest need. And it is through such service that we feel we can best commend His love to others.

Being both medical men we have a fairly well-equipped hospital with about 28 beds. In tending the sick, those who have a very simple training and even such as have none at all, can co-operate with those who are medically qualified; the one essential thing being the "feeling heart." Often those engaged in the simpler tasks of cleaning wards or attending to the needs and comforts of patients or dressing their wounds, can by their individual love and care bear a more effective witness than the doctors. Undertaken in this spirit, the most menial task becomes honourable and can be done with joy. In order to work out this ideal we have often had to carry on the healing work without any thoroughly trained assistance, as we feel there is something greater than mere efficiency." It is an essential part of our healing work to tell the patients and their friends of the hope which we have in Christ and of *His* power to heal and save, and we also, on occasion, pray with them individually and especially before surgical operations. Every evening we meet for prayer with,

and on behalf of, the in-patients, when we also tell them the story of Christ; but it is the individual talks which have been most helpful in influencing some of them. We have also seen how wonderfully patients have recovered as a result of prayer in spite of our inability to do much for them.

The agricultural work had to be developed (though so far we have no agricultural expert) owing to the urgent need occasioned by the poverty and unemployment of the villagers themselves, around us. It is often hunger and low vitality that make our medical work doubly difficult. So we have a farm, with two good wells sunk by the labour of the villagers themselves, and this provides work for at least some of our poor neighbours. Every morning we have a service for them with a short address, before they begin their field work.

Seeking the True Approach to India.

A school was started for the poor children of the neighbourhood three years ago, since when it has progressed considerably. The medium of instruction is Tamil—their own mother tongue. Our aim is to make this a vocational school, and already weaving has been introduced and also agriculture. We have in addition a small orphanage, the children living in the ashram in a little cottage called "Balya Veedu" (Children's Home).

We have been earnestly seeking to express our life and service in this Ashram in a way that will make Christianity more intelligible to the people of India, where, for so long, a deeply foreign tinge has been given to it, both in the churches and in the lives of the Christians. We have also been trying to bring about a home and a fellowship into which men

called of God from other lands can come to India, not in the patronising attitude of teachers and leaders, but in humility seeking to learn and to serve along with Indian brothers, as well as to impart to others what they have been taught of God. We wait in faith that He who has begun this will also make it grow in conformity with His will.

Christmas 1924 and New Year 1925.

"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor that ye through His poverty might be rich." "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."

DEAR FRIEND,

Once again the year is drawing to its close and another New Year is about to begin. How one's heart loves to dwell on the never-to-be-forgotten, sacred, and precious memories of childhood, home, loved ones, (of whom some are no longer with us in the flesh), the friends of our youth, and the companions of our more mature years; God bless them all; and, dear one, you are not forgotten. Here in this our little corner, this Ashram of a countryside in Southern India, rising on a plateau gazing on the hills—east and west, north and south amidst many a village farm house (just simple thatched homesteads) and scattered villages all round! The glorious sunrise behind the Javadhi Hills still continues to give its rousing cheer to hearts that wake with the birds of the dawn (but alas for some of us to whom the chill of our November morn acts as a deterrent luring us to our blankets!) but, sure, all of us love to linger beholding the ever shifting but ever

more inspiring colours of the sunset, as they change from glory to glory, mellowing and solemnising our hearts.

Some of you must have heard about the sad days for our villagers last August and September when an epidemic of cholera carried away several poor folk. Our dear Ashram volunteers whole-heartedly co-operated with us in visiting the villagers, whom we (with a good deal of success) treated with intravenous saline injections. Our faithful bulls and the open country cart (we proudly call it "Our Motor Car") with its never grumbling driver, a village lad of our neighbourhood, often carried us and our equipments to the more distant villages, sometimes in the dark nights. Poor suffering folk, often they lay in their tiny huts on a simple mat or on mere straw with hardly a thing to cover themselves with. After praying with them and with a word of cheer, we used to commence intravenous injections. Often, there would be a wonderful change for the better. Sometimes they were too far gone.

Now the monsoons have come and almost gone, the fields have given a good harvest, and the second sowing (mostly horse gram—the 'dhall' harvest time not quite yet) is over, and the villagers are having a happier time. The peace of the green fields is round about us, and we too of the Ashram are sharing in the harvest, as we too with the help of our village neighbours are engaged in farming. You must come and see, as they gather the ground nuts or as our bulls are engaged in ploughing. Our cattle are increasing in number and also our poultry. Pray that God may send us a dear brother trained in agriculture, to take charge of our farm

work, and help the poor village folk in improved methods of agriculture.

It is Sunday evening. The school boys are coming up to the Ashram for the Sunday Evening Service. As some of you might know, the Christian Residential School which has been taken on by the N.M.S. is only about half a furlong from the Ashram, and according to the new constitution of the school, the two institutions work in close fellowship with each other. The school (although it had only 12 boys last year) has trebled its strength this year, and we expect it will continue to grow. Pray that men with educational ideals may join either the Ashram or the School fellowship, and help towards creating leadership in the Indian Church by inspiring the boys with a new vision of the Kingdom. In October, at Puram, a village 4 miles away, the first convert since our coming to Tirupattur was baptised in a garden just outside the village by immersion, receiving the name, Lydia Anbammal. It was inspiring to sing, as she came out of the water, our favourite Tamil Lyric "Praise the Lord, O, My Soul and all that within me is." As we sat under a tree, the minister who baptised, addressed the gathering of Hindu villagers on the significance of the step the convert had taken, and what it meant to be a Christian. Some of you might know about the Hindu young man who has been asking for baptism for a very long time. We have been making several efforts to persuade his parents to permit him liberty of conscience to read the Bible, and to attend the Christian worship. We, on the other hand, promised the father that we would advise the young man to continue to stay and work with his father, and not be baptised at least for



After Sunday service at the village of PURAM

some time. But the father has not only refused to let him read the Bible, but has subjected him to cruel beatings every time the lad attempted to attend Christian worship. During the last baptism, as we were returning from the place of baptism, the eldest brother of the lad beat him cruelly as he was walking with us. Immediately after the service, we went to his father and had a long talk with him. But he would be very sarcastic in his answer. We are very anxious to try to do our best not to do anything that would estrange parents from their son's baptism. We are anxious that the converts should live and work among their own people and witness for Jesus Christ. Also we do not want any one to be baptised unless he has given us clear proof of his sincerity and devotion to Christ. This lad has been very faithfully carrying out all our instructions as regards continuing to stay with his parents and patiently submitting to persecution. But he is most anxious to be baptised. We feel we have no right to with-hold his request any longer, and are therefore arranging for his baptism on the 7th December.

The Hospital work is going on as usual. We have accommodation only for 25 in-patients, but we have often an average of 30 in-patients. The out-patients days are crowded, and we have to go on all day until 4 or 5 P.M. Please pray that God may send us the right kind of volunteers for this service. We have had with us a very dear doctor volunteer, whose cheerful comradeship and willing service, we all very much appreciate. But his term with us is over, and he is leaving us at the end of this week. We have for the first time a volunteer who is a professional carpenter. His services are very welcome here.

Last week end, the N.M.S. missionaries, a dear friend who has offered to help at the headquarters work of the Society as an honorary Secretary, the School Fellowship, and members of the Ashram Fellowship had a very helpful Retreat at Bargoor. It is a nice, quiet place among the hills. The subjects for our meditation and talk were "Holiness" and "Fellowship". We had heart to heart talks and seasons of earnest prayer. We felt we were indeed members of one family.

Yours sincerely,
S. JESUDASON.

THE ASHRAM,
TIRUPATTUR, N. A.,
S. India,
23rd July 1925.

DEAR FRIEND,

How often our hearts turn to our dear friends, those whose fellowship has been precious to us in the past years in its joy and helpfulness, and more especially to our former comrades and fellow members of this family at this Ashram! Our hearts feel a special glow, whenever we sing at our Family gatherings, that verse some of you have in years past have joined in singing, "We pray Thee for all absent friends who have been with us here." How we wish we could have even here below a day of reunion, even if it be only for a brief while, when we could revive old friendships, and tell,

each other of our experiences in the years we have been separated, and above all have the great joy of grasping once again the hand of friendship, and looking into each other's faces ! Can you not suggest some practical way of accomplishing this ?

We have at present four languages represented in our family, although our family numbers in all only ten souls— young and old—Telugu, Malayalam, Tamil and English (or rather Scotch !) Some of you might personally know Mrs. Krishnayya, Navamoney, Thasiah, Devamoney and Samuel (formerly known as " Mottyan ").

The more recent additions to the family are Mr. A. J. Thomas from Malabar, and Mr. Simon, a young Telugu in " kavi " (Sadhu garb). We are a happy family.

Also a little Hindu boy of about five years of age has been handed over to us by his father, a very poor man whose wife died. This little fellow is full of life and therefore full of mischief !

We have been feeling that the medical work has been taking such a very preponderating part of our activities, that we were in danger of not only keeping away from this fellowship, men with talents other than the service of healing but also of neglecting the need for devoting more time to cultivate our inner life, as well as, of failing to give that fellowship to the members of the family so essential for our corporate spiritual growth. Bishop Abhraham of the Mar Thoma Church who spent some time with us, has been a very real help to us, in prayerfully thinking out with us, how

we could so regulate our daily life that we may not only serve our sick people, but also build up the family life, so that we may understand and love each other and share together our joys and sorrows, as well as be a source of mutual helpfulness. We have also arranged to have daily classes for Bible study as well as classes for medical instructions.

The new programme also gives much more time to us all for private study or quiet thinking. But the hospital continues to get more and more filled, as a matter of fact, it is a problem how to find accomodation for the ever increasing number of patients seeking admission into the wards ! In addition to the wards of the " chathiram " (hospital) even the " mandapam " (waiting hall) is taken possession of by self-admitted inpatients ! !

We have also started a small school for the poor children in our neighbourhood. At present it is conducted by Mr. Thasiah (Paul Devadasen) in a little shed, but we are putting up a more permanent little school building with sufficient land all round, for a garden where the little ones could do some manual work. In our new programme for the family, we have also included for ourselves manual labour in the field from 6 to 7 a.m., after the morning private devotion (5 to 6 a.m.) we have our morning united family worship at 7-15 a.m. and the last retiring family worship at 9 p.m.

We request you to pray especially that God may bring us into touch with those likeminded, who it is His will, should join this fellowship and service for the need for them

here is very urgent, and very real, especially those who would initiate and develop different forms of service other than medical; for Christian service, to be effective, must touch life in all its aspects.

We would like you also to pray that the development of the women's side of this fellowship and service may in God's good time be brought into being. We, the few here, feel very much like those "five loaves and two fishes" unequal to the great need before us! "Lord, multiply us."

In spite of our most ardent wishes, we cannot find the time to visit our village friends, especially our ex-patients, and so keep up touch with them. And we would like to be more in touch with you too, at least through letters, but, also, we are able to do so only at such distant intervals like this! If it be His will that this Family should grow and continue to live and serve, we know He has His chosen ones. May they hear and obey His call, and hasten here!

We are getting our "Asrama Pamalai" (Song Book) revised, and enlarged. We shall send you a copy when it is ready (to those who can appreciate our Tamil Songs!)

Do write and let us have all the news about yourself. It will cheer us all.

Yours sincerely,

S. JESUDASON.

23rd July, 1925.

Christmas 1925 and New Year 1926.

THE ASHRAM.

TIRUPATTUR (NORTH ARCOT DIST.)

South India.

" Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift."

DEAR FRIEND,

The family at the Ashram sends you hearty greetings, and wishes you a very happy Christmas and New Year laden with blessings. Since we last wrote to you we have had three other additions to the family—P. G. Ooman (who had temporarily left us with the intention of taking the medical course at Miraj). G. Samuel (a philosophy honours graduate of Madras University) and P.O. Alexander (who has also rejoined us after an absence of about 6 months). Samuel is Tamil but the other two are Malayalees. The "Philosopher" (Samuel) is more keen on hospital work than on philosophy, a sort of reaction perhaps from excessive thought to excessive action! He has also been giving us some lessons in psychology as applied to our daily life. Simon Jatajachsudu (our only representative from the Telugu country) takes the place of Brother Lawrence, and cooks for some of the poor in-patients and also assists in the school work. The day school for poor boys from the neighbouring cottages and farms is flourishing under the enthusiastic management of Thasiah (whose latest attempt to grow a beard seems more successful!). More than fifteen of these little ones who come regularly are very much attached to him, for he not only teaches them but also bathes them, plays with them,

shows them how to plant out gardens and visits their homes too when any are sick. The night-school has increased its strength and the several classes are held from about 7-30 to 9 p.m. in the Mandapam (that is, the open hall in front of the hospital). The young men who work in our fields, or look after our cattle also attend this. Some of these latter (all of them villagers) sleep on the premises and to a certain extent take part in the Ashram life. We do not know how far this is really influencing them for God.

Some of you might be interested to know how far the labours of the members of the family at the vegetable garden have been fruitful! Some have proved themselves more energetic, and successful than others! However, we have succeeded in growing enough vegetables for our ordinary daily needs. We have had an abundant supply of very good tomatoes and "Ladies' fingers" ("Vendaikai").

The monsoons have been very favourable this year and it is very refreshing to view the green fields all around. We are also having a delightful climate just now. We are especially thankful, because the rains mean so much to our poor villagers. We have not yet got an expert brother to direct our agricultural work, but young Samuel Devasahayam ("Mottyan") continues his unabated enthusiasm in this department! Alexander has been trying to learn ginning and spinning cotton (grown in our fields).

In the "Chathiram" (Hospital), the wards have been full, and the out-patient days as crowded as ever. Navamoney does the surgical nursing, and looks after the operation theatre, besides assisting in the injection treatment of

lepers. Dhavamoney looks after the medical wards and the dispensary, and Ooman does the surgical out-patient dressings.

There has been an increase in the number of cataract patients coming for operation; the general surgical wards too have continued to be full, and self-admitted patients continue their sojourn in the "Mandapam!" Some of you medical people, may be interested in an operation we had recently, of a case of Congenital Hernia with the Caecum and Appendix down requiring reduction of this "Sliding Caecum", as well as Appedicectomy through the ordinary incision for Hernia-tomy. We continue to get those inoperable cases of cancer of the Jaw or of the Cervix Uteri in advanced stages. One's heart is pained to see their tears, and one wishes they had come earlier. Who will go and teach them! Some of you would remember the way those who leave the Ashram cured, used to show their gratitude! Their latest fashion of thank-offering is to bring a "Thamballam" (a large plate) full of several good things with incense "Kutchies" (small sticks smeared with incense) burning and place it at the feet of the person conducting the evening ward service at the "Mandapam" just as the closing song of adoration is being sung! They also continue to bring fowls, eggs, etc. as before. All this, is chiefly done by the poor. They listen very attentively during this service when we sing, and speak to them and pray for them. Please pray that the service of the sick and the poor and the message of the Good News may bear fruit even in lives brought to a living experience of Jesus.

Thomas is helping the "Sevak" a good deal in the duties of "Samsaharam" in keeping accounts, managing the

stores, and in "bazaaring." This is a great relief from many distractions ! But this has been a handicap to him in his study of Tamil.

Last August, Bishop Abraham, Rev. Dr. Larsen, and we both spent two very helpful days at Bargur in prayerfully discussing several problems concerning the internal affairs of this family and Ashram as well as our relationship to outside organisations and institutions. We are thankful for the help and fellowship we received from them.

One of us (Jesudason) was recently on tour in Bengal, chiefly trying to get into personal touch with Christian students by staying with them in the different colleges, and also speaking to them in meetings occasionally. The following brief account of his tour may interest you.

"On my way I broke journey at Nellore. Christodas (who was baptised at the Ashram last year) met me at the station and took me to the Rural Farm started by Mr. Swamidoss of the Y.M.C.A. about 7 miles from Nellore. The kindness of Mr. Swamidoss and his co-workers to the boys whom they are training in weaving and agricultural work, as well as the simple homelike atmosphere of the spot impressed me very much. Christodas seemed very happy in his new environments, and, I had quiet talks and prayer with him. I bought the Kaddar woven by him and it was sent on to the Ashram.

I arrived at Calcutta on the 7th Nov. After speaking at the Congregational Church (Bhavanipore) on Sunday morning, I spent about 10 days in staying with Christian stu-

dents at the following Colleges—St. Paul's, Bishop's College, Scottish Churches College (Duff Hostel), and Serampore College. Every where the students received me with great affection, and several opened their hearts to me freely. Often at nights (the only, free quiet hour available for them), I sat up late with them listening to their life stories, their problems, and perplexities. Some had deep and noble longings, but were distressed by the difficulties that stood in their way. I tried to cheer them by narrating my own experiences in life, and assuring them that transparent honesty and steadfastness, in firmly adhering to an unselfish purpose in life, will surely win however insurmountable difficulties may seem to be.

I felt particularly sad to see that some of the students who were converts from Hinduism or Islam, were not at all happy in their altered circumstances. In every case the chief reasons seemed to be their disappointment of the missionaries concerned, with their joining the Christian Church. It may be, they expect too much sympathy and help (often perhaps material) from the latter. But the whole case needs careful self examination on the part of the Christian worker. One has to give them all the sympathy and fellowship in one's power while at the same time being careful not to encourage in any way that frequent failing of some new converts—to become dependants on the Christian worker.

Some of the students were anxious to know what part we of the family at the Ashram took in "politics." They were distressed that some of the Indian Christian students eschewed politics and kept themselves aloof from the currents

of national life which are so powerfully moving their fellow-country-men, and in this way, came to lose touch with the latter. I explained to them that while we did not believe in the purely theoretical and emotional side of politics, so often confined to the stirring up of race-hatred or party factions on public platforms, we did in our own humble way, aim at putting into action, certain ideals which we believe are practical Christian politics. Such ideals are, the unity of conflicting races in Christ, the abolition of war, the rooting out of slave mentality among our people, the development of Indian leadership and initiative, the removal of so-called "untouchability", the spread of education among the backward classes, the amelioration of the condition of our poor village peasants by developing improved methods of agriculture, the combating of preventible diseases through the hospital, through oral instruction and village visiting, and, above all, spreading among our people that knowledge that "maketh the simple wise, and brings light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." I urged them not to waste their emotion and time in mere spasmodic outbursts of political sentiment; but rather to try and to their very hardest to put into practice their ideals in their own little corners, and then, true "Swaraj" will soon be nearer home to us all.

While at Calcutta I was able to find out the whereabouts of one of our "wandering sheep"—M. S. Galesh, who spent over two years with us at the Ashram and whom some of you know personally. I called on him at the Gour Mutt (near the Northern outskirts of the city) where the disciples of Chaitanayya live. One of these engaged me in conversation until Ganesh came in, and he as well Ganesh (who now calls

himself "Gunanand Bramachari") told me that their ideal was the preaching of "Truths" and not service, as the latter "only touched the body which was impermanent."

I also spent two happy days at 'Shantiniketan,' Bolpur. Ariam Williams took me early in the morning (about 4-30) to the "Mandir" (Prayer Hall) where two Bengali members of the staff, he and I had our morning devotion, Mr. Mullick first sang a Bengali devotional song very beautifully, after which Ariam and I sang "Lead, Kindly Light" and then the other friend chanted a Sanskrit prayer. It was an inspiring experience. That still hour when all around was dark save for the rays shed by the twinkling stars above.

At day dawn I saw the boys seated here and there very still under the trees for about 15 minutes and then they came together, and chanted a Sanskrit prayer. After some light meal they came together again for singing, and then, the classes began here and there under the trees. The freedom combined with reverence (a rare combination) which seemed to mark the relationship of the pupils and teachers was remarkable. Music and art seemed to take the premier place in the educational system.

I had a very pleasant hour with "Gurudev" (as the poet, Dr. Tagore, is called there). His message was that we Asiatics should not try to compete with the West by adopting their methods of life and action, as Nature in the East was unfavourable to excessive physical exertion requiring a great fund of energy (which Westerners have acquired through climatic conditions and heredity). He advised that we should reduce our needs to simplicity so that we shall

not be forced to an unequal competition with the West. I gently protested that his view of Eastern climatic conditions unfitting us for tasks demanding great output of energy was too pessimistic ! However, one felt the force of his advice for more simplicity in life and its activities (only I would add for the West as well as for the East !).

Towards the end of my stay I accompanied Father Chakravathy to Haluaghat in East Bengal near the Assam frontier. Here the members of St. Andrew's Brotherhood (an indigenous organisation now affiliated to the N.M.S) are working among the Garo Hill Tribes. Separated by hundreds of miles from their fellow Christians and far removed from any convenience of modern life, these brothers are carrying on a labour of love for these Garos. The Brothers live a life of the utmost simplicity. We had a most exciting journey from the nearest Railway Station 26 miles away, along very primitive roads and over still more primitive bamboo "bridges" most of which seemed to have wide gaps in between ! The Brothers were in "Retreat", and I enjoyed their fellowship very much. The Garos seemed to love them, and appreciate what is being done for them both through a boarding school, and through visiting their village homes."

For friendships renewed, and for new friendships formed; for the new circle of friends whose prayers will support the family at the Ashram, for all these and many other blessings of this tour, I feel very thankful.

See what a large letter we have written to you. We do hope you will also do us an equally good turn ! One of us

(Paton) expects to go away to Scotland next April to spend some time with his people. Please pray that if it please God He may move the heart of an earnest Christian doctor to come and help us during his absence

We have at present with us Mr. Arthur John of the Chittoor Ashram who is conducting for us a class on "Bhagavad Gita." He has also brought with him a Hindu "Sadhu" (Kashmiri) who knows Sanskrit well. Mr. Sanjivi Rao also has been helping in these classes.

Yours sincerely,

S. Jesudason and E. Forrester-Paton.

THE ASHRAM,
TIRUPATTUR, N. A. SOUTH INDIA,
August 1926.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

So many of you have written to me, and I am really very sorry I have not been able to write to each and every one of you individually a personal letter. After all a circular letter like this will lack that living heart to heart touch which brings out the joy of fellowship. However, it is the second best and let me *at least do it*. Paton sailed for Europe on the 3rd of last April, and that will explain to you why even this circular letter is so very much delayed this year, as well as the reason for the first person singular in which it has to be written ! We hear from him regularly and interesting parts of his letters as well as those of all our friends who have been with us here are shared by the whole

family every Sunday night, when as usual we gather together for our song service after the night meal. This is a great help for us all to sing with real earnestness that favourite verse (as we often do during the last family gathering at the chapel at 9-30 p.m.)

“ We pray Thee for all absent friends,
Who have been with us here,
And in our secret hearts we name,
The distant and the dear.”

Paton had a very pleasant voyage, and after spending sometime with his people at Alloa, joined Rev. J. C. Winslow (of the Ashram at Ahmednagar) for a few days quiet “retreat” at Keswick. They both seem to have been very much refreshed spiritually by this quiet time of waiting upon God and talking over the things of His Kingdom, especially of its relation to this little corner of ours. After this he (Paton) went over to London to attend a short course at the Tropical School of Medicine. He also went to the Students’ Conference at Swanwick in July, where he met several like-minded students keen on the service of the Kingdom and anxious to come over and help us in India. Especially, he met a group of young Oxford students thinking of starting a residential school in India on “Brotherhood” lines. One of these is a Ceylonese and the other British. Paton is at present at N. Berwick with his people, but hopes to go to London in September to take a practical course in the Diseases of the Eye, at Moorfields Eye Hospital.

At the beginning of this year, Dr. A. J. Appasamy (who along with Canon Streeter wrote that book “The Sadhu”)

gave us a short course of lectures on "St. John's Gospel and the Indian Mind." We are very grateful to him, and also to Mr. Arthur John of the Chittoor Ashram for thus helping us in this aspect of our Ashram life which is also very essential, but which we medical men are apt to lose sight of in the midst of strenuous work—devotional study and meditation. Dr. Appasamy has also presented our library with several standard Tamil books, thus meeting a long felt need. We are also grateful to Canon Goldsmith, Rev. H. C. Balasundram and the Rev. R. L. Pelly for conducting some very helpful communion services.

About the end of last March, Paton and I visited Trinity College, Kandy, and spent a happy day with our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Coomaraswamy there. We were especially interested to see there, the building of a beautiful chapel modelled on Buddhist architecture. It was interesting to hear how they were using elephants to bring huge granite pillars up to those hilltops on which the College buildings stand. It is indeed refreshing to feel that after all these years the Christian Church in the East is beginning to appreciate "whatsoever things are lovely" in the culture, civilization, and religious genius of the East as expressed in architecture, and is beginning to adapt these things for the service of the Kingdom into which both East and West have to bring of their treasure without brushing aside "as heathen" (as hitherto has been done), everything born out of the religious devotion of non-Christian peoples. Some of you might know that here in this Ashram also, we are getting materials ready for the building of a chapel modelled somewhat after the South Indian temples.

While at Colombo we were very happy to see something of Dr. D. Paul (now an estate doctor) an ex-member of the Ashram.

After seeing Paton off to Europe on the 3rd April, I went to Anuradhapura where our student friend Bonney showed me round the ruins of ancient Buddhist architecture and other works of ancient art. I was interested to see how within the same one temple area they worshipped both at the Hindu and Buddhist shrines. Thence I went to the Ceylon Christian Students' Camp at Morratuwa. Students had come from different parts of Ceylon, but Jaffna seemed to be specially heavily represented. The opening address of the Chairman, a Burgher medical student, was delivered with great earnestness and power, and I am sure it "went through" us all. The Arch-deacon of Colombo spoke on the "Incarnation", the next morning, and the same evening I spoke to them on "The Sanctified life." After the meeting a medical student came to me for a quiet talk and expressed his great surprise at this unusual keenness of a medical man about "these things"! It is very sad indeed that the profession of healing so Christ-like in the nature of its ministry should have acquired a notoriety that it cares for none of "these things" of Christ.

After spending about 20 days in quiet fellowship and rest with Bishop Abraham at Kodaikanal, I returned to the Ashram on the 1st May, and some patients began to come to the hospital as soon as the news went round that the Doctor had returned. The wards have been full all these days, not to say any thing about the self-admitted patients who take possession of the "Mandapam." We are only a

small family at present—Navamoney, Thasiah, Devamoney, Samuel ("Mottayan"), little Manappan, David (a new addition) and myself.

Thasiah is very happy with his school for the poor children of the neighbourhood. Its usual strength is about 24 (including some little girls), but just now owing to sickness only 17 children are attending. This is the nucleus of a small educational venture which is full of great possibilities, when God moves the hearts of some brothers with a vision for a bigger educational enterprise to join the Ashram family. There are now so many highly educated young Christian men aimlessly going about "seeking for a job." Would that the spirit of venture for the Kingdom of God take hold of some of them, and make them restless to make their lives mean something for their generation! So many of us seem to be quite interested and happy to lead, (what a quiet reflection should soon reveal), a mere animal life of satisfying our ambitions according to accepted human standards. There is nothing wrong (humanly speaking), in being a good animal! But is that the highest ambition for a man with a Divine destiny that had planned for him a life with a mission like unto Christ's? It is this utter lack of sense of a life mission that makes our young men so purposeless in life. But when they do come to their senses, they too like Him would cry "I have a baptism to be baptised with and how I am straitened until it be accomplished!"

Pardon this digression! I do feel this very much as I have been coming across recently many Christian young

men with no spirit of adventure about them because of a lack of their over-mastering sense of one's mission in life.

Some of you medical people would like to know something of our hospital work. We had been very much handicapped for want of qualified help. However, one day Dr. I. David of Colombo happened to be with us on a visit, and I took advantage of his presence to do a sub-total hysterectomy for uterine fibroid. The woman got on quite well after the operation and left us happily. Just as I was stitching the skin wound the doctor had to leave for the train! We have also had several other operations for appendicitis, hernia, tumours, retroperitoneal iliac abscesses, amputations &c.

All these often without any qualified help! The lepers continue to come for their bi-weekly injections. God has been wonderfully helping us, and in spite of the limitations of the small number of workers, patients have got on very well on the whole.

God has been also answering our prayers for help. Dr. Samuel (Telugu) came on to help us about the latter part of May and remained with us for about two months. He endeared himself to the family and the sick people by his gentle loving ways. He could not stay longer as he had to be in Madras in July to complete his course in maternity work. We are expecting two friends, Dr. Victor and Mr. Jacob (a trained dispenser), to join the family in September as volunteers.

The agricultural work also is going on as usual. You will be glad to know that the new well that is being sunk in our field on the other side of the road is very hopeful, and there are already two very good springs in it. We are trying some paddy cultivation near it. We were without any rains for sometime, and it looked as if all the dry crops were going to die out. The poor villagers were very unhappy. But just this last week there were welcome showers, and the fields are refreshed and the people happier. Samuel is a great help to me in supervising their field work as well as in the kitchen department, as I am now acting as house-keeper also.

Although I am not able to write to you all individually, do accept this as a personal letter and write and let us know all about yourself. May we all grow together in the love of Christ which shall bind us together with bonds that shall never break. The family at the Ashram (and I am sure Paton would wish to join in the same if he was with us just now), send you their love.

Yours affectionately,

S. JESUDASON.

THE GERMAN HOSPICE,
TABGHA, THE SHORE OF GALILÉE,
TIBERIAS, P. O. PALESTINE.

April, 1927.

DEAR FRIENDS,

This circular letter has been delayed because of my (Jesudason's) illness. About the end of October I got an

attack of Catarrhal Jaundice, which necessitated my going to the General Hospital, Madras. During my absence the work of the Ashram was very faithfully carried on by the brothers of the Ashram family. Especially we are very thankful that Dr. Victor, who had come in the first place only for three months, decided to stay on, and he is still continuing the medical work. I am very thankful for the prayers of so many of you which God has answered in restoring me to perfect health again. I returned to the Ashram in December, and we had several friends and visitors who helped us with the preparations for Christmas, and who shared with us the joy of our poor village people at the Christmas Tree, and the common meal at which altogether about 200 were present. Some of our visitors along with the volunteers did very good work at this time visiting the adjoining and villages and studying the conditions of life and the needs of the people. After my illness I was advised to go for a long sea voyage, and after prayerful consideration it was decided that I should go to Europe for a stay of a few months, visiting Palestine on the way in company with Bishop Abraham and Paton. At the same time Mr. J. J. Hensman (to our great joy and thankfulness) decided to join the Ashram family for about six months during my absence. On the 21st February Bishop Abraham joined me at Madura, and we proceeded to Colombo and embarked on board the S. S. Hakozi Maru, a Japanese Boat, on February 24th. The sea was calm and we were glad to find quite an international group of fellow-passengers, (Japanese, Chinese, Belgian, American, English and others) who were very friendly to us. On both the Sundays on which we were on board there were services at which the Bishop preached. On the second occasion, the passengers

volunteered a collection on behalf of the missionary work of the Mar Thoma Church, and at the end of the service there was placed in the hands of the perplexed Bishop, a motley collection of coins of all the different nations represented, which after much calculation was found to amount to about Rs. 20. Two of the passengers, a Chinese Christian student and a returning medical missionary, joined us in daily Bible study and prayer.

On Tuesday the 8th, we reached Port Said in the morning and as we came up on deck we saw Paton waving to us from a little boat, and soon he joined us on deck and we rejoiced to be restored to one another's fellowship again. The same noon we three took train for Cairo where we reached about 4.30 the same evening. We called at the local Y.M.C.A. and found out the address of Dr. Guindy Wasif, a Coptic Christian, who had been known to two of us in Edinburgh, through whom we got into touch also with several other leaders of the Coptic Church. We shall never forget the genuine, warm affection of these friends who made our brief sojourn in Cairo, both pleasant and profitable. They told us that there were over a million Coptic Christians in Egypt besides the nine million Christians in Abyssinia who also recognise the leadership of the Coptic Patriarch at Cairo. We had the privilege of visiting the venerable head of the church, Mar Kurillos, 'full of age and years.' He received us very kindly and spoke to us by interpretation a few words of greeting. It was a matter of special interest to us to learn that after so many centuries this ancient church was showing signs of awakening, and our friends were in the forefront of this progressive movement. Some proofs of this we saw in the

' Friends of the Bible ' movement (for the devotional study of the Bible among the younger generation) of which they told us, and in the Theological Seminary and the new beautifully equipped Coptic Hospital which we visited. We were also shown their cathedral and the most ancient Coptic church in old Cairo. It is called the Moallaca, or ' hanging ' church because it is built high on an old Roman fortress. Energised and equipped the church, we felt, has a wonderful opportunity for service among the millions of Non-Christian people of Africa. And we assured them, as their fellow-Christians and brothers from India, of our prayerful sympathy and keen interest in the future of their church.

One morning we visited El. Azhar, the great Moslem religious university, where in little groups of about 20 each the students sit around their professors, each professor being allotted the space round one of the many pillars. Specially expert Professors were allotted two pillars and 40 students. In this university are many hundreds of students drawn from 14 different countries receiving free religious education fitting them to propagate the Moslem faith in their several countries. Cairo is a city of mosques and many ancient tombs, and we visited some of the most remarkable of these. We were particularly impressed by the intricate beauty of the decorative work combined with a wonderful simplicity of style which lent itself to an atmosphere of reverence.

Our journey to the pyramids of Gizeh was of special interest because the last part of it was accomplished by taking turns on the back of a camel, a short experience of whose swaying gait was more than sufficient for all of us.

The pyramids look like man-made mountain peaks being built thousands of years ago of huge blocks of stone cut out from the hills on the opposite side of the river Nile. They were in reality built as tombs and inside them were placed the sarcophagi containing the embalmed bodies of ancient kings. Close by these pyramids is the Sphinx a huge rock-cut figure of a man's face on a lion's body.

We saw most wonderful examples of the ancient civilisation of Egypt going back to 3000 and 4000 years B.C. in the National Museum. Here lie exposed to view mummies (i.e. embalmed bodies) of some of the ancient kings of Egypt, one of whom is supposed to be the Pharaoh who oppressed the Israelites. Many of the coffins were beautifully inlaid with gold and precious stones while others (called sarcophagi) used to enclose these, were of stone carved in the likeness of the deceased. Time would fail to tell of one half of all the wonderful works of art etc. which we saw in that magnificent museum.

We left Cairo on the evening of Friday (11th March) by train to El-Qantara (The Bridge) where we crossed the Suez canal in a little boat and got into the Palestine train which was waiting for us on the other side. When day dawned we found ourselves at Gaza in the neighbourhood of which Philip met the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts. viii, 26.). The morning was cold and clear with a very heavy dew. Then travelling on through the Philistine country, we came to Lydda (Acts. ix. 32) where we changed train for Jerusalem. From the Plain of Sharon the railway gradually ascends through the Vale of Sorek, passed the village of Timnath connected with the story of Samson (Judges. xiii. &

xiv) and winds up a narrow gorge through the hill country of Judea. The hills are bare but in the valleys are patches of cultivation with groves of olive trees, and the slopes in many places covered with many kinds of beautiful wild flowers especially the scarlet red anemony and pink cyclimens. We continued to ascend until nearing the tops of the hills we got the first view of the outskirts of Jerusalem, and one felt deeply stirred at the remembrance of all the past associations of the city, the centre of so much religious fervour and patriotic affection. The Railway Station is some distance from the city, and as we drove round towards the Y.M.C.A., we had a fine view of Mount Zion encircled by the present city walls, and far away to the East the mountains of Moab on the other side of the Dead Sea.

In the afternoon we entered the old city through the Jaffa gate, and winding our way through the crowded narrow streets we came to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where we also attended the Greek Orthodox Service the following morning. Here we were shown round the traditional sites of the Crucifixion and Burial, but the whole place is such a maze of the chapels of all the different sects with their altars and decorations that it was quite impossible to form a mental picture of what the place must have looked like originally. It was indeed very painful to see so many sects holding their rival services, a police guard being present to prevent disturbances. What with the elaborate rituals the curious visitors loitering about, the would be guides clamouring for employment, the apparently indifferent behaviour of the worshippers and the presence of police settling disputes, we felt a second "Cleansing of the Temple" was required.

(as in John, ii. 15). To us who come from India and who as Christians condemn idolatry, the sight of some of our fellow-Christians falling down and kissing mere stones at these supposed sacred sites, filled us with shame and sorrow. No wonder if this was the type of Christianity, Mohammed saw in his day, he turned away in disgust to found a new religion.

We then visited the small remaining part of the original wall of Solomon's temple, consisting of several courses of huge cut stones, above which there is a high wall of more modern date. The place is partially enclosed so as to give some privacy to the Jews whom we saw there in large numbers repeating prayers in a wailing tone with tears in their eyes, some of the old women affectionately kissing the stones. Here is a sentence translated from one of the litanies they chant, "For the temple that is destroyed: We sit in solitude and mourn. For the majesty that is departed; We sit in solitude and mourn, etc." It was indeed a very pathetic sight. Not far from this place is the Dung gate in the present city wall, and from the top of this odoriferous spot we had a fine view over the valley of the Kidron and the valley of Hinnom which unite below near the pool of Siloam (John, ix. 7,) and on the hill beyond we saw the village of Silwan (the modern Arab name for Siloam) where once the tower fell and killed the 18 men (Luke xiii. 4.) Then turning to our left we made our way down into the Kidron valley and crossing the Brook Kidron (John, xviii. 1) opposite the tombs of Absalom and Zechariah, and up the slope of the Mount of Olives with the Garden of Gethsemane (visited later) on our right we recrossed the brook by the

road bridge, and up again into the city through St. Stephen's gate. Not far inside the city we came to the site of the fort of Antonia where in all probability Pilate sat on the tribunal and delivered Jesus to the Jews. From here the way is called the Via Dolorosa, the road through which Christ must have been led out to be crucified.

The next morning we motored to Bethlehem, about 5 miles to the South of Jerusalem, visiting on the way the tomb of Rachel. Bethlehem is a small town beautifully situated on the top and slopes of two hills. On the side of one of these stands the church of the Nativity, and about two miles away down in a valley are some green fields which according to tradition was the place where the angels appeared to the shepherd. The church is very old and built in simple style. We were led down some steps from the chancel to a cave cut in the rock which from very early times has been thought to be the stable of the inn where Christ was born. Though it is impossible to be certain of the details, that great event must have taken place in some such lowly spot as this. Bethlehem is a Christian town, and the manager of the hotel in which we were staying, an Arabic Christian, had kindly arranged for us to have lunch at his home which was nearby. Our table was prepared in the cool shade of a tree in an olive grove close by his house, and we were greatly refreshed by his hospitality.

Next morning (Tuesday, 8th March) we got seats in a car going down to Jaffa, (the old Joppa) down through the hills and valleys of Judea (in some part of which John the Baptist must have had his home) past Kirjath Jearim, a

pretty village on a hill, and out on to the plain of Sharon. As we approached Jaffa we passed through many beautiful orange groves. With the help of Mr. Nyland of the London Jews Society we found the house supposed to be that of Simon the tanner. It is in an old part of the town very close to the sea, and is now used as a Mohammedan mosque. From the house-top we had a fine view over the harbour, it was just midday and we thought of the vision that came to Peter and which has meant so much for us Gentiles (Acts, x. 9.) We also saw some of the missionary work carried on in the town by the L.J.S. and the Scottish Mission. Just north of Joppa is the new Jewish town of Tel Aviv, a large Jewish colony which has sprung up since 1919. We were interested to see the nicely planned Jewish houses and gardens as well as the large Synagogue which was just in process of being completed. All along our train route to Haifa, as well as in many other parts of the country we came across many thriving Jewish colonies (many of them recent.) In Haifa too we saw the new Jewish Technical Institute which is striving to assist in the technical and industrial development of the Jews, as the Hebrew University at Jerusalem in furthering general higher education. In these institutions Hebrew is the chief medium of instruction, and every effort is being made to make it a common language for the Jews who having come from different lands speak many different languages. Arabic is the language of the indigenous population both Moslem and Christian. This patriotic effort to make Palestine once more the national home of the Jews has been greatly furthered by the Zionist Movement which has been collecting funds in many countries. Unfortunately the inflow of population has been more rapid than the

existing state of the little country, already fairly well occupied, can at present support; as a result there has been a good deal of unemployment and discontent, among the Jews as well as opposition from the other communities. We met several of these young Jews and were impressed by their idealism though there seemed to be very little religious basis behind it.

Haifa is a large modern town hugging the slopes of Mount Carmel and with a beautiful view over the Bay of Acre and of the coast nearly as far North as Tyre. Here we spent the day with some good Christian friends, and in company with a Jewish convert went up Mount Carmel on which are situated several monasteries and convents, the view from here was very extensive, even Mount Hermon being visible on clear days.

From Haifa we had a very interesting motor run, at first skirting along the foot of Carmel, then crossing the little river Kishon near Harosheth of the Gentiles where Sisera mustered his chariots, (Judges, iv. 13.) and up the slopes of the hills to the North of the Plain of Esdraelon. From here we had a magnificent view over the plain with the summit of Mount Carmel (the scene of Elijah's triumph, I Kings ; xviii.) to the West Megiddo, and the mountains or Samaria to the South, and the Mounts of Gilboa (1. Sam. xxxi), Little Hermon, and Mount Tabor (Judges, vi 4-14 & Psalm lxxxix), and in the distance beyond the deep Jordan valley the Mountains of Gilead away to the East. A few miles further on we came to the town of Nazereth to which we return later,

as also Cana of Galilee, and continued our way Eastward till suddenly the deep blue Sea of Galilee more than 1000 feet below us, and the hills beyond burst into sight. Here we stopped for a picnic lunch, and then on down the winding road to the town of Tiberias (John vi. 23) by the Lake side. The road then skirts round the edge of the lake passing through the little village of Magdala, (Mary of Magdala) and crosses the green plain of Genneseret to Tabgha (= seven springs) where we spent two very happy weeks at the German Catholic Hospice under the care of very kind and jovial Father Tapper.

During these days we had plenty of time for quiet, and for watching nature in all its ever changing beauty ; the lake at one time so smooth and clear and blue, at another obscured by a hot haze, and yet again ruffled into angry-looking waves dashing against the shore, or (most beautiful of all) with the full moon rising from over the Eastern hills reflecting a path of silvery light upon the waters across which the dark shadows of the fishing boats would silently glide. We had many walks together among the hills, which are rather bare and stony but well cultivated and beautifully green on the slopes down towards the lake-side, and everywhere covered by a great profusion of wild flowers, brilliant red, and yellow and purple and white, blossoming but for a day or two, and then replaced by other varieties and colours. There too as we walked by the foot paths through the fields we could see the parable of the sower enacted before our eyes ; there was the corn shooting up on the stoney ground only soon to be scorched, and there were a few poor straggling ears showing themselves among the masses of thistles

and wild flowers, and close by the wayside too the thick green crops growing on the good soil.

The towns that were flourishing in our Lord's day, Capharnahum, Chorazin and Bethsaida, are to be traced only by their ruins, and even the very location of them is not quite certain. Just near Tabgha where the water from the springs forms several brooks running down into the lake, may have been Bethsaida (of Galilee) the city of Simon and Andrew and Philip. And just here too is a favourite spot for the fishermen wading into the shallow water and skilfully throwing their flat round nets (weighted at the circumference) on to the water and catching the fish imprisoned beneath them, just in the same way as we read that Simon and Andrew were doing on that memorable day when Jesus called them to come and follow him (Mark i, 16 & 17). Hardly two miles further along the shores of the lake from here are the ruins of Tel Hum which almost all agree must have been the site of Capharnahum. There are the ruins of a very old synagogue here, excavated number of years ago, the foundations and some of the lower parts of the walls and pillars standing just as they were, and from the broken stones part of the building has recently been reconstructed. It must have been a fine pillared building with beautifully carved capital and cornices, and from the type of carving archeologists reckon that it must have been built originally about the time of Christ, with some changes and additions at a later date; in fact from the distinct traces of two Roman eagles visible on one of the key-stones it seems certain that it must have been built by a Roman, and hence it is most probably the very synagogue built by the centurion

and in which Christ did several of His mighty deeds. Near the synagoue have been founded the ruins of a church built on the traditional site of the house of Peter's mother-in-law, and on the shore of the lake traces have been found of an old stone harbour, where Matthew may have sat at the receipt of custom. Up among the hills about two miles from Capharnahum are the ruins of another town, most probably the old Chorazin as its present name would seem to indicate. Here too are the ruins of a synagogue built in the same style as that at Capharnahum with many beautifully carved stones but probably of a later date. At these and other places we spent interesting times all the more so as Dr. Christie (of Tiberias) who has made a special study of these localities himself showed us and talked to us about them. The edge of the lake near Capharnahum forms several bays from which the fields slope up as natural amphitheatres just suited for speaking from a boat to crowds assembled on the shore. (Matt. xiii. 2) and a little further on, a hill rises up from the lake side, on the level summit of which, Christ (coming down in the morning from the solitude of the higher hills behind it) may well have delivered the Sermon on the Mount (cf. Matt. v. 1, with Luke, vi. 17).

We were fortunate in meeting at Tabgha several interesting friends, and one day we formed a party with some of these to go for a sail on the lake. Starting early in the morning the fishermen rowed us across the lake about 6 or 7 miles to a little place called Khersa (identified with Gergesa, Luke, viii, 26.) on the Eastern shore where we landed. It is a very solitary place with the hills of Gilead rising steeply up behind it, and about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to the South

is a spot where the hills slope down directly into the sea as described in the the Gospels in the incident of the healing of the demoniac possessed of legion. Then we rowed Northward to the place where the Jordan flows into the lake along the shore (opposite to Capharnahum). Here there are hillsides with grassy slopes which seem to meet all the requirements of the place of the feeding of the 5000 as described in all four Gospels, and these lands might quite well have belonged to the town of Bethsaida Julias situated a mile or two away on the East of the Jordan as it flows into the lake. In these as in all attempts to fix the exact locations of events in the life of our Lord we are left in the realm of doubt and uncertainty, and it is good that it is so, lest we fall into the errors of those who lavish their emotions and money in a false worship of traditional sacred sites forgetting that those who love Him must feed His sheep and bring into the fold the 'other sheep' for whom He died. For example, we heard that there were about 180 priests and church dignitaries around, the Greek patriarch in Jerusalem, while that same patriarch felt it was impossible to send a priest to minister to a neglected little congregation in the country; and in Nazareth the Roman Catholics are planning to pull down the Church of the Annunciation in order to rebuild it in a more magnificent style though the present church is more than sufficient to meet the needs of the congregation there.

S. JESUDASON.

E. FORRESTER-PATON

THE ASHRAM,
TIRUPATTUR, (*North Arcot Dist.*)
South India.

Christmas 1927—New Year 1928.

"JESUS CHRIST,

Though He was divine by nature,
Did not snatch at equality with God,
But emptied Himself by taking the nature of a servant ;
Born in human guise and appearing in human form,
He humbly stooped in His obedience even to die,
And to die upon the Cross."

May this mind be in you and in us also this Christmas-tide.

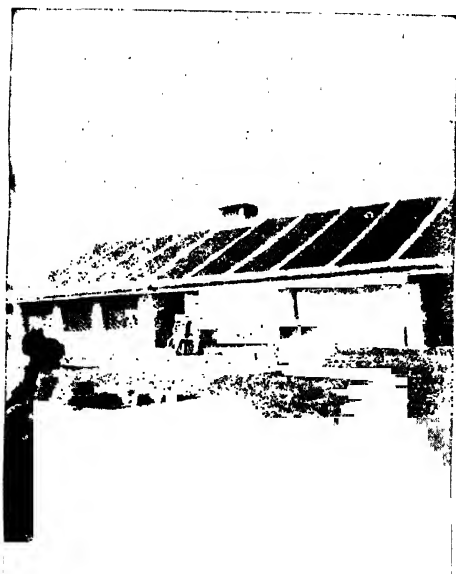
DEAR FRIENDS,

We wish you all a very happy Christmas and every blessing for the New Year.

Many events have taken place since we wrote you the last circular letter in April from Palestine. The family here, along with Mr. J. J. Hensman, were carrying on the work very faithfully during our absence, and they gave us a very hearty welcome back on our return here in September. We were very glad to find all our brothers keeping well and happy, and led on by Mr. Hensman's enthusiasm they had been doing vigorous work in preaching the gospel in the surrounding villages in addition to the medical, School, and agricultural work. The medical work was being carried on in one half of the "Chathiram" building, while the school was accommodated in the other half.



Ashram Family in 1927.



Since our return from the West, we have been kept busy in various ways. The hospital ("Chathiram") has been full, self-admitted patients taking possession of the "Mandapam" in addition! We have had several cases of cataract operations and also some major surgical ones. But most of the patients have been with us for the ordinary common medical ailments.

There have been several changes in the family.

Mr. Hensman has gone home to Jaffna, but faithfully keeps in touch with us. He intends to do honorary work among the churches there, in rousing up their enthusiasm for the cause of Christ's Kingdom. We are deeply thankful to God for the way in which he was moved to offer himself for service in the Ashram just at the time when one like him was most urgently needed. Dhavamony has left, as his aged father has come from Burma, and he felt he ought to help him. (He is now in the Swedish Mission Hospital at Tiruppatur, Ramnad.) Simon Jalajakshuda is helping in the dispensary and doing the medical nursing. Dr. Victor, who was carrying on the hospital work during our absence, is assisting on the surgical side. He has proved a real brother to all of us, and has been loved by the patients for his gentleness and care for them. We are very sorry that owing to family reasons he has to leave us soon. John Rodrigues (from Mangalore) and John Chinniah (from Jaffna) have recently joined us, and help in surgical dressings. As the former knows weaving and tape making (for cots), he will soon be helping at the school by teaching the boys some of these things. We have a new addition to the family from

England—Ernest Victor Willans, who joined us a fortnight ago. He is a B.Sc. (Chemistry) of Leeds, and also is keen on music. He is getting on quite happily with our Indian ways of living! He is now studying Tamil, and also helping Thasiah at the school. At present his idea is to be with us for about three years or so.

The school for the poor children of our neighbourhood and for our orphan boys (we have now five of them) is going on vigorously, and Thasiah (Paul Devadason) is just as keen as ever in this department of our activities. There are about 30 children in all, including a few girls. Both of us also try to help Thasiah a little in his work, as he has really too much to do to teach all the four classes. Our latest attempt is to teach the little ones elementary Hygiene and Anatomy in Tamil! The children themselves give very suitable name to the bones. We feel very strongly that the medium of instruction in schools must be the language of the people. Real and efficient mass education will be impossible so long as we continue to adopt a foreign tongue as the chief vehicle in education. The great and sad gulf that has been created between our few English educated men and women and the millions of common people is due in no small measure to this great error in the educational policy followed in India. Art, poetry, and scientific research, besides the development of initiative and originality, are all being hampered among the people because a foreign tongue is being made the channel of culture. We have not hesitated to translate the Mosaic code, the Jewish prophets, and the deepest truths of Christianity into the languages of the nations of the world; but we persuade ourselves that the science and laws of this universe cannot be translated

into the same languages ! Surely where there is the will, there is the way. Would that the "leaders" and "authorities" of the land could realise this ! Then indeed the day would dawn on our people when our millions would realise their birthright, and their manhood and womanhood.

Pardon this digression and "lecture" ! But one feels these things strongly in an area like this, where the pitiful conditions of the people make one very sad.

We have not got our agricultural brother yet. Samuel continues his unabated enthusiasm in this department, and threatens to make a granary of every room that is left empty by the unwary occupant ; He actually kept some of us out of a large room (to which we had claim) for a few weeks by fillings it with ground nuts, the odour of which was by no means acceptable to those obliged to sleep in the verandah close, by ! However, we successfully fought with him, and his groundnuts have retreated to the proper quarters. The sugar cane and the paddy are all fresh and green, and are ripening unto harvest.

Some of you will probably want us to say a few words about our tour in the west. As Jesudason did more knocking about on the Continent of Europe, it will perhaps be best for him to say it in his own words.

"The letter is already long, and so I shall try to summarise my "impressions" as briefly as possible. My primary object in this tour was really twofold. First, to see my old friends, and to enjoy their fellowship ; and secondly, to come in contact with new friends who are working for

peace and international goodwill and understanding. I visited Britain, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Czechoslovakia, and Holland. As I had not much time I had to go through these countries in a rather hurried fashion. My old friends Rebentrost and family, Pastor Humburg and family, (Rhineland), and Dr. Heufelder and family (Bavaria) received me with the atmost affection and hospitality : and I shall never forget the happy days I have spent with them. Dr. Heufelder's little girl (about three years of age) fell in love with me, and persisted in dragging me out of my bedroom in the mornings to play with her. While in Bavaria I visited the Benedictine College at Dillingen, and had some happy hours of fellowship with the students there. In spite of our theological differences of opinion we felt our oneness in Christ Jesus—especially one afternoon when they sang to me, "Jesu, the very thought of Thee" in Latin, and "O sacred Head once wounded," in German. I attended a conference of the Fellowship of Reconciliation at Neu Sonnesfeld, at which delegates from several nations were present. On the way I passed the castle at Eisenach, where Martin Luther first translated the Bible into the vernacular. In Czechoslovakia my friend Antonio Wondrich took me to a Boy Scout woodcraft camp near the Tatry Hills, on the Polish frontier. Professor Seifert, with the other teachers and the boys, gave me a most affectionate welcome ; and the days I spent with them were some of my happiest days in Europe. The boys spoke three languages ;—Czech, Slav, and Russian ; and they sang beautifully each night as we sat around the camp fire in the open fields, amongst hills covered by forest. At Prague I visited the Czech University. I was interested in the fact

that although until the last European war, German was the medium of instruction in higher studies, they have already made Czech the language of this university. I had some very interesting hours with Prof. Winternitz and Mr. Tutsch (who helped me very much by going round with me); both of them are keenly interested in international peace. At the Teutonic Students' Conference at Putbus on Ruegen (Baltic Sea), I was able to get into touch with several German, Danish, and Norwegian students. The subject of the conference was "Grace or works", and the chief speaker was Prof. Barth. The very hot fervour with which the discussions were carried on by the opposing schools of thought reminded me of our own land, and the hot disputes between the "Monkey Theory" and the "Cat Theory" of Vaishnavite theologians of South India! However, as we walked in the beautiful forests and on the seashore of that island in the evenings together, we forgot all the heat of the forenoon discussions. One of the most delightful experiences to me here was my stay with Pastor and Mrs. Daer and their children. Such a happy, and lovable family! The eldest boy was sure he was coming to join the Ashram!

In Sweden I was the guest of my friend Yougve Lowgren and his family, and visited also the Universities of Lund and Upsala. I can never forget the kindness of Engineer Dhar and his sister, who showed the greatest cordiality to me. I had the same experience while visiting the Oslo University in Norway, and all this was a lesson to me in the virtue of showing kindness to strangers which these friends possessed.

Norway, as I saw it travelling from Oslo (Christiania) right across the country to Bergen en route to Stavanger, to see my friend Pastor Stansaker and his family, was a land of lovely scenery, with its snow-clad hills and lakes, waterfalls and rivers. My fellow passengers in the train (about 20 Botany students of the Oslo University with their Professor) made the journey very enjoyable by their friendly comradeship. It was wonderful for me to realise how Norway, with only a population of about 2 millions (less than the population of say, the district of Madura,) has developed its culture and civilization with its own independent language. I have very happy recollections of Denmark, and shall never forget the day I spent at the International College at Helsingør, near Copenhagen. The College was started after the war in order to promote international peace and understanding by bringing together in an atmosphere of friendship the young men of different nations, especially those of the so called "working class." One felt even in the short time spent there, an inspiring atmosphere creating a sense of brotherhood. I can never forget the solemn declaration of the president at a meeting of all the students, in which he said, (after I had addressed the students). We assure Dr. Jesudason that not one of us would ever take up arms to kill our fellowmen in warfare." I am very deeply indebted to Mrs. Brondsted, whose hospitality and unsparing help made my short stay in Denmark very profitable.

In Holland I spent a happy and quiet day with the poet Dr. Van Eden and his family. Mrs. Eden is a great admirer of Sadhu Sunder Singh. I spent also an evening with Mr. Limburg, the local F.O.R. Secretary, who told me that

there was a strong peace movement in the Dutch Church, led by a very large number of Pastors. In England I stayed with Hooper at Cambridge and Verrier Elwin at Oxford, and was able to get into touch with several students. One of them who is going to Africa to join a Brotherhood particularly impressed me by his fervour and by the lovable simplicity of his personality.

Besides those working for peace of whom I have spoken, I also came across some belonging to strongly nationalistic and militaristic movements with quite opposite tendencies ; of these I prefer to say nothing here.

Pardon such a curt description of a tour which has meant more for me than I can say in a single letter. There are so many other friends and events I should like to speak about.

Love and greetings from the whole Ashram family.

Your Brothers,

S. JESUDASON,

E. FORRESTER—PATON.

CHRISTU-KULA—ASHRAM,
 (THE ASHRAM OF THE FAMILY OF CHRIST,)
 TRUPATTUR, (*North Arcot Dist.*)
 (*South India.*)

1st September, 1928.

DEAR FRIENDS,

The Circular Letter has been delayed for various reasons. It is no use wasting your time and ours by mentioning all or any of them. We have many things to tell you since last that we wrote to you. We shall try and tell them in some order so that we may not get mixed up. This is the first Circular Letter travelling from our own Ashram Post Office opened today !

We have often been cheered by several friends who have been visiting us from time to time. Mr. and Mrs. Henriod spent a few days with us, and the former gave us an interesting talk on what was being done in South Africa by Christian Students, to bring about reconciliation and friendship between the Europeans and the Africans there. Swami Svardhanand Bharathy, who though a Hindu, has written a beautiful account of the life of Christ in poetry, also paid us a visit and spoke to us on the place of Experience (apart from History) in Religious Life. Dr. and Mrs. Larsen also were with us in March and we had a nice Communion Service. Mr. Manilal Parekh, who spent about a week with us, inspired us all to see both India's greatness and India's needs from a new angle of vision. This is only mentioning a few among the many good friends of different countries who have in various ways helped us in the Ashram.

The Ashram Family itself consists at present of (beside, of course, both of us); your old friends Thasiah, Simon, and Samuel Devasaghayam, (Mottayan) and the following: K. T. Alexander, Christudass, George from North Travancore, P.O. Alexander, Nayagam from Nagercoil, Dr. Premdas from Mysore, Rajarathnam from Madras, Miss Sircar and her brother from the Punjab. Willans had to leave us in June owing to certain private home affairs. He is now teaching in the Noble High School at Masulipatam. Although he is not with us at present, we are keeping in touch with one another and we still feel we are together in spirit. He is getting on very well with his work there which he is very much enjoying. Thasiah, Nayagam, Rajarathnam and P. O. Alexander are carrying on the school work very happily with nearly 45 boys on the school roll. A Night School also is conducted by Rajarathnam and Christudass and is attended by the grownups who are working during the day. Christudass is teaching a few of the older boys weaving and is supplying us with nice carpets, towels etc. We have had some enjoyable picnics out in the country both with the children of the School and with the members of the Family. This kind of School to be developed on "vocational" lines, conducted through the medium of the mother tongue, is really meeting a very urgent need among our poor villagers, as we hope that by such means (when multiplied) both illiteracy and unemployment could be successfully coped with. But the great and pressing need is for young, educated people with the necessary vision and spirit of self-sacrifice to come over and help us. We are very thankful that Nayagam and Rajarathnam have decided

to help us for a year ; but there is plenty of room for more people who would stay longer.

As for agricultural work, we are still waiting prayerfully for an expert brother, who would take charge of this department. Samuel's enthusiasm for this sort of work is as keen as ever.

In the management of the household affairs, Miss Sircar has proved a real Godsend. The Sevak has been completely free from the problems of " what shall we eat, and what shall we drink ? " as we all have been very well looked after, since her arrival here on February 3rd, that memorable day of " Simon, Go Back ! ! " It was very amusing that even in this little country town of Tirupattur the " Sircars " (this word also means Government !) found the " Harthal " so severe that they had to pay four times the ordinary fare to get one single bullock cart ! Besides the kitchen, Miss Sircar also has been helping us a great deal in the study classes and discussions that we have been having together. Her brother has been relieving the Sevak a good deal in correspondence.

Simon, K. T. Alexander, George and Premdas have been joyfully co-operating with us in the hospital work. Simon had to be operated on for appendicitis last April, but he is doing very well now. As you know, the work often involves the cleaning of operating theatre and wards and many other humble and hard duties and we are very thankful our Brothers have been working often from morning till evening willingly, not sparing themselves. Our operations have included besides several cataracts and the other

ordinary surgical things like hernia, amputations etc., a case of Obstructed Sliding Hernia and Madura foot (Mycetoma). The recent great scarcity of water on account of the failure of timely rains, led to several severe accidents owing to people falling into wells, which in these parts are unprotected by walls, as most of the people are too poor to build them. We have had some very sad cases of fracture of Cervical Spine and multiple severe injuries and fractures ending fatally. There was also an epidemic of Cholera in a village near by, but as we got to know it quite early, we were able to fight the epidemic quite successfully with the help of our brothers who often had to stay with us in the village till midnight. All the patients treated by us, with one exception, are now progressing well. The local Health Inspector also co-operated with us in disinfecting the open wells of these villages. As we go in and out among these poor villagers, and realise the enormous uphill work that is before those who feel for them and long to lift them up, we realise more and more, the need for faith to patiently toil and work amidst many discouragements. The work is really very urgent and the need is great. Who will come and help? Although Simon, Alexander and George are not technically "trained" men, they have been of very great help in serving these poor people in their distress and afflictions, even when some of the accident patients so miserably bruised and maimed, taxed the Brothers who had to dress them, to the utmost.

Besides the members of the Family whose names have been given above, Suresh De (Bengal), Abraham, Manickam, Isaac, David Chellappa and Mrs. Srinivasa, have also been

with us during the long summer vacation and helped us greatly in carrying on the work. God's loving providence brought us Peter to assist at the hospital for five months just when Victor was about to leave.

We had some welcome showers about a week ago and the fields look greatly refreshed. But unless people in authority with the necessary love, talents and vision do something soon to improve the old, now neglected, water storage reservoirs, irrigation channels, and the wells, and devise some scheme of relieving poverty and unemployment (not forgetting education), the people of these areas are bound to lead perpetually a hand to mouth and pitiful existence. How small we feel before such a stupendous task ! Last April, some of us went in batches to the villages and stayed there studying rural conditions and methods of rural uplift. The villagers were very friendly and hospitable and in one village we had our headquarters in the house of a poor village friend. We were very glad to see how well the "panchayats" (Village Councils) were working in some villages. At one village there was a panchayat school, library and reading room, also a "bhajana" party (Village Choir) etc. Night Schools were conducted regularly by honorary workers, in another. In a third a school master, though a poor man, was giving his services free in teaching the villagers, and so on. It showed us how great the progress could be if these people were really given a chance !

The visit of the members of the S.C.A. General Committee and of some other members of the International Fellowship Council, gave us an opportunity to come into

touch with some of the fine men and women who love India and work for her good. We are especially thankful for the genuine interest of Mr. A. A. Paul in this Ashram, and it was chiefly through his influence that the meetings of the above organisations were held here..

We often feel humbled by the wonderful way God reveals His care for us. One day, while just casually opening a very ordinary looking envelope that had arrived by post, we discovered a Five-Hundred-Rupees note inside, sent by a friend who, in his anxiety to remain anonymous, had risked sending such a large sum by ordinary post. What a wondrous faith this friend has shown!! Last March, after one of us had finished speaking in a "Convention" in South Travancore on "The Significance of the Cross", a poor teacher, whose last earthly possession was a little gold ring, gave it as an offering. It is not the gift so much as the grace with which these gifts are offered, that makes them so beautiful.

Now, dear friends in far away lands, though this is a printed Circular Letter, do take it as coming from your friends in this corner who hold you in affectionate remembrance. Do write and tell us all about yourselves. Distance and the demands of our various personal duties do not allow us to hold personal converse and communion, but we, who believe in the things of the Spirit, would still continue to be together in Him.

Your Brothers,

S. JESUDASON,

E. FORRESTER—PATON.

TIRUPATTUR, N.A.,

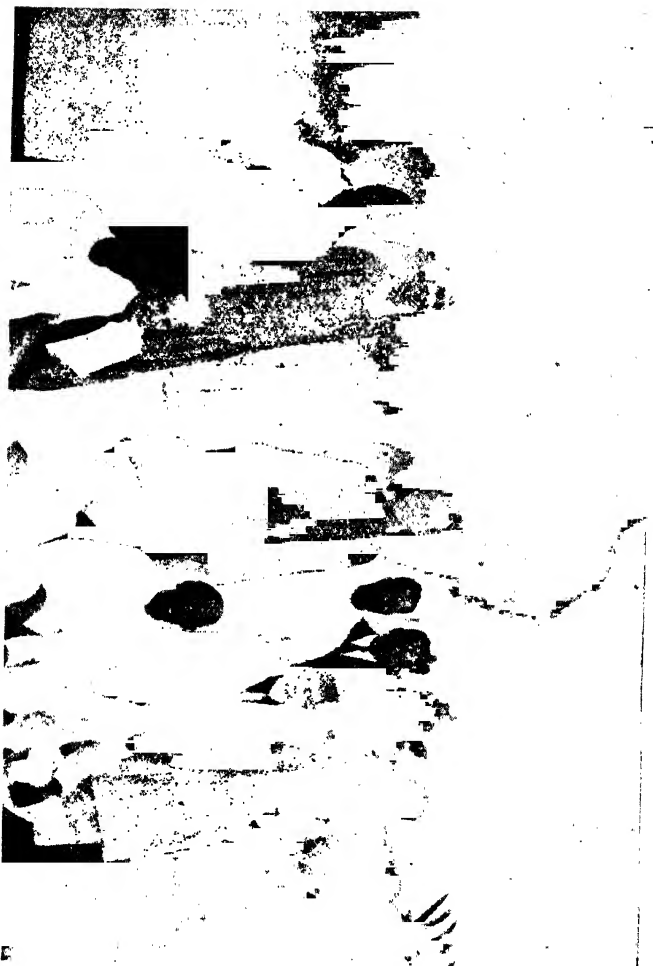
S. INDIA,

*June, 1929.***A CIRCULAR LETTER****CHRISTU—KULA—ASHRAM***(Family of Christ Ashram)*

DEAR FRIENDS,

It is nearly six months now, since we last wrote to give you some news of our doings at the Ashram. Many of you we have to thank for your letters, the gladness which comes from renewed fellowship, and the strength and help from your continued thought and prayer for us.

Last December, as many of you know, there was the Executive Meeting of the World's Student Christian Federation at Mysore (at which Jesudason also had the privilege of taking part and meeting several friends from foreign lands) and during the following weeks, quite a number of delegates came and stayed for two or three days with us at the Ashram. It was a real joy and privilege to have so many visitors from across the seas: America, both Negro and white, Japan, Korea, China, Australia, New Zealand, Bulgaria, Germany, France, and U. K. were among the countries represented. They helped us to get a broader vision of things in many jolly talks at our meal times, as well as at four or five meetings in Tirupattur Town where several of them spoke on conditions in their own countries. For most of these meetings, one



International Visitors to the Ashram in 1928.

of the leading lawyers put a large palm leaf shelter in front of his house at our disposal and the crowded audience showed intense interest, specially as they heard of the uplift of the negroes in America, the conditions in Korea, the inner working of the Bolshevik Revolution and after from the point of view of one who had personally suffered from it. We felt that we had been brought into touch with so many people some of them (like the Koreans) struggling for fuller life in much the same way as we are in India. But it is the personal links with so many friends overseas which we value most of all, and so, now this letter goes out to you with a message of good-will and fellowship in a good many more countries than any of our previous letters have been sent to.

We had our Christmas celebrations at the Ashram on the Saturday previous to Christmas day. As usual on these occasions we decorated the space in front of the kitchen cottage and hung up the presents for our work people and school children on the tree nearby where our well is situated. Then about sunset, school children came in procession singing and carrying the banners of their various schools—the Ashram Day School, the Night School, and the Night School at Achamangalam village. Several of our friends from Tirupattur Town and also a number of the villagers as well as our work people all assembled out in the open. There were Tamil Lyrics and Action Songs and dialogues by various groups of these children, and after prayer and the telling of the ever new Gift of God which Christmas symbolises, the various presents, mostly clothes and other useful articles, were distributed. Then all sat down in rows with leaf plates in front of them for the Christmas dinner, there

must have been nearly 300 altogether. No roast turkey and plum pudding, but some good dhall-curry and rice followed by fruits, made up the menu! After this was all cleared away, a space was made in the centre, the harmonium was brought in and the Ashram Night School boys proceeded to give us a very realistic dramatic performance of the Good Samaritan. They entered into this with great gusto and feeling, and almost the whole of the expression was through appropriate songs and choruses. At the end, a very amusing scene was introduced in which an Anglo-Indian doctor came in to treat the wounded wayfarer at the inn, and excelled himself in his bustling zeal and his invectives against the slowness of his assistants (not altogether complimentary to Ashram methods of medical practice)! All this was a great surprise to us, for the whole idea and arrangement had been carried out by the group of village boys and their two teachers without the least help from us. Finally, for those who were able to remain, we had the Magic Lantern pictures of the Life of Christ, and the old, old story, very beautifully told by Miss Jayamani Taylor of Puram.

On Christmas day, both of us were at the All-India Quadrennial Students' Conference at Poonamallee near Madras. This was a very large combined conference for men and women students coming from all parts of India, Burma and Ceylon; and as many of the Federation delegates were there also, it included representatives of almost every part of the world. It was perhaps just this fact, that we felt the common bond that held all together and shared our experiences, that (even more than the meetings) made the Conference the success it undoubtedly was. We were very

glad to have the opportunity of meeting there a large number of our old friends as well as making some new ones. Miss K. Sircar who had been with us in the Ashram for the greater part of last year, was also there. Before we proceed further with the letter, may we suggest that wherever possible little groups of those who are keenly interested in the Ashram (especially those who have also been here) should try to arrange to meet regularly for intercession for us? Such groups already exist in one or two places in India. But we long for more such. And for this purpose we are going to send an occasional note of our special needs or problems and other requests for prayer to such individuals and groups as write and ask us for them. We feel that this will be a very great help to us, as we know that many of you will be interceding with and for us, and also we hope letting us have from time to time, possible suggestions for the work as may come to your minds. In this way, you will be taking a very real part in the work for God's Kingdom which the Ashram is trying to do, and also upholding and strengthening us by joint faith. We shall be very glad if those of you who feel that they could co-operate with us in this way, either by forming such intercession groups, or individually, would write to us; and then we shall try to keep you informed of our needs and special subjects for prayer.

During the first few months of this year, the different activities of the Ashram were going on steadily. Helping in the hospital were Simon, K. T. Alexander, George and Chelliah. They were all kept very busy as there were a particularly large number of patients requiring dressing daily or oftener, besides helping at operations. Two of them

were also carrying on the injection treatment for leprosy and other diseases. Since the outbreaks of cholera at Puram and Achamangalam last year, there have been several localised outbreaks in different villages to which we were called. Fortunately they were as a whole, not very severe and we are thankful that the great majority of the patients treated recovered. We usually have prayer with the patients or the relatives and then give intra-venous saline injection, which has a most marvellous effect in restoring the pulse even after it has become imperceptible at the wrist, though the effect is not always lasting and the injection has to be repeated in bad cases. We also give the relatives phenyl lotion in two large pots, one for washing their hands in and the other for soaking the soiled clothes from the patients, and we disinfect the wells from which they got drinking water in addition to trying to get them to understand that all drinking water must be boiled. In this cholera work, all have gladly taken their turns to help, and Simon and Alexander have been very successful in giving the intravenous injections themselves. It gives the people new hope and courage when they find that we are willing to come to their villages, go into their houses, (often staying for some days in the village itself if distant) and freely handle the patients, and it gives us an opportunity also to show them how we disinfect our hands and feet afterwards. They are always very grateful to us and usually also very willing to have the Anti-cholera-Inoculation.

In the Ashram Day School, Dhasiah and Nayagam were teaching for a time. Christudas has now got four looms going, and is teaching weaving to three of the bigger boys;

he has also rigged up some simple little looms on which a number of the boys have been weaving tape for our hospital beds. Peter, a friend of Christudas who was in the Industrial School at Panruti has also started carpentry, and is getting two or three of the boys initiated into that. So that of the boys in the school some do half day lessons and half day manual work. We desire to develop this still further so that the education of the boys, may be directly related to their village life.

In place of having one central Night School, we found it worked better to have three different Night Schools in different villages from which the boys and young fellows come. So Dhasiah and Nayagam have been going to Achamangalam, Christudas to Konapet and Peter to Kadrimangalam. In two of these places at least, some of the fellows are very keen to learn and have made good progress. Dhasiah's time has been rather broken up as he is acting as Ashram Postmaster in addition to the school teaching, but now that the Post Office has been transferred to the School buildings we hope that it will be more convenient. One of the orphan boys acts as Postman.

Since about the middle of April, quite a number of College and industrial school students have been with us, some staying for one month and others for longer, and with their help, we have been trying to concentrate on village work. Cotelingam brought with him a fine group of men from the Pasumalai Industrial Training School, and others came from Palamcottah, Madura, Vellore, Ranipet, Madras, Bangalore (U. T. College) and also Calcutta and Jubbulpore, so that during part of the time, there were more than thirty

of us altogether. Several of these were trained teachers and others expert in manual work and these latter have taught some of our school boys mat-weaving for which we have set up five looms. We were very thankful that two well qualified doctors (Drs. Murthi and Sunder Raj, both Hindus) came to help us with the hospital work for part of the time. They made themselves one with us in all our Ashram life, and by their pains-taking and devoted service for the patients and at serving at meals, they were an example to us all, also by their openness and jovial cordiality, they endeared themselves to many of us. We are hoping that one of them when he is free after a month or two, will return to the Ashram for a longer period.

For the Village Work, we divided ourselves up into groups of about four in each, one Ashram brother going in each group. At the beginning there were four groups (but these had to be reduced as our numbers got less) and the villages they went to were Achamangalam, Mukkanur, Muthur, Thadavalasu, all except the last are within three or four miles of the Ashram. The arrangements we made were, that the groups should go out to the villages on Monday, stay there for the week, and come back to the Ashram for Saturdays and Sundays, when we had some meetings to share our experiences returning to the same villages each week. In the villages, we stayed mostly in a part of the village school. Only at Mukkanur the brothers had to give up the work owing to the opposition of the villagers. At Achamangalam and Thadavalasu the villagers have been very cordial, and the brothers had great encouragement.

What are our activities in the villages? Naturally a good part of our time is occupied in household matters fetching water from the well, cooking the food, washing up and keeping the place clean; there may seem to be very little of Christianity about these things but we learn to share with the people in the simple contacts of daily life, and learn too what some of the troubles and burdens of life are under village conditions; and in so many ways these things help to bring about a closer understanding and the feeling that we are their fellow human beings and not hopeless strangers and foreigners as many of the villagers think. Whoever may have to be blamed for it, it is there, this deep rooted idea in the villages here that Christianity is utterly foreign; and it is a very hard, up-hill work to remove a false tradition. We had different forms of service: medical work, night school, organising games for the children and young fellows, and lantern talks, some about village hygiene and at other times telling the story and showing them the pictures of the life of Christ and illustrating His parables. In each village, different activities predominated, in Achamangalam the Day School and the Night School as well as visiting the people in their house occupied most of the time. At Thadavalasu there was medical work and almost every night Daniel's slides for mass adult education in simple reading and writing were thrown on the screen and attentively followed by a good crowd. In Muthur (and also for a few days in Puram) it was by getting into touch with some fine groups of youngmen and of children swimming in a big well with them, organising games with them in the evening and having talks with them that perhaps the most useful work was done. We fully realise how far

short these things fall from the presentation of Christ in all fulness, yet we are learning and drawing experience from these village visits which we hope will be of help to us in the future.

Now something about ourselves. Jesudason went for a short visit to Madura and Palamcottah in end of February. He visited the Pasumalai High School and St. John College, Palamcottah, and addressed the students at both institutions on the call of rural India. Soon after, Paton had to leave, as he had an invitation to take part in some of the meetings of the Indian Christian Convention at Mandakad in S. Travancore, and on the way he also greatly enjoyed visiting the friends in several places in Tinnevely and Travancore. Then after only a few days at the Ashram, he went to Poona to attend the retreat for N.M.S. missionaries at the Christa-Seva Sang, (Rev. J. C. Winslow's Ashram) and was greatly helped by the days of quiet and happy fellowship there. He then took the opportunity to spend two days at Mr. Gandhi's Ashram at Sabarmathi (near Ahmedabad), and though he had only the chance of a few minutes conversation with Bapuji (as Mr. Gandhi is familiarly called there) he was greatly impressed by the unity of purpose and the spirit of self-sacrifice and moral rectitude among the young men there, with two or three of whom he was able to get into close personal contact. This is the time of year when we usually get away for our hot weather holiday. This year as we have arranged for the students to come during their vacation time, we took our month's holiday in turn (so that one or other of us might be at the Ashram nearly all time) and we have been enjoying the cool eucalyptus-laden breezes of the hills and

the beautiful scenery and picnic outings and walks, and are feeling much refreshed.

We are sorry that K. T. Alexander has several times been laid down with stomach trouble, and last month he got so weak that it was felt that it was better for him to go home. We hope that he will be soon completely relieved, and feel able to return to us.

We should also let you know how much we have been helped by some of those who have come as visitors. Outstanding among these were the visits of Father Winslow and Brother George of the Poona Ashram and later, of Bishop Pakenham Walsh. They spent week ends with us and encouraged us much by their fellowship and devotional talks as well as by celebrating the Holy Communion with us. Cotelingam is a great help in managing the Ashram "samsara" (family cares) and two theological students, Banerjee and Suresh De, and a medical student Asirvadham, and Rao, a new edition, are assisting at the hospital. It is a pleasure to watch the two North Indian brothers struggling with our "Heavenly" language (Tamil) !

Finally, some of you will be interested to know that the building of our "House of Prayer" following somewhat the style of a Dravidan Temple or Mandapam, has been slowly going ahead. The pillars with their capital and most of the stones bressemers are now in place, and one begins to see something of what it is intended for. We long that in time it may be a place that will stand for the outward expression of the spirit of worship for many of our village neighbours (the indigenous architecture symbolizing the share of our

Indian heritage in His kingdom) ; and that we and they may together there, seek to worship the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in spirit and in truth.

You must forgive us writing, such a long account of personal and common place details, but we are writing them to you our friends, to whom we feel sure that even these things will be of interest because of that love which binds us to one another.

In the name of the " Family " we send you hearty greetings,

Your Brothers,

E. FORRESTER-PATON,

S. JESUDASON.

**CHRISTU KULA-ASHRAM,
Tirupattur N. A. (S. India.)**

December, 1930.

DEAR FRIENDS,

Here is Christmas already fast approaching with its message of joy and gladness. As we gather in spiritual fellowship with you around the Babe in the manger and experience anew that eternal wondrous love of His, thoughts go out to you in loving greetings and Christmas wishes.

How fast this last year has flown past, and so little seems to have been accomplished. Yet many things have happened since we sent out our last Ashram circular letter ; where shall we begin ? Perhaps the most important thing for the Ashram has been that ladies have taken up their abode with us. Our prayers have indeed been assured in the coming of Mrs. Shreenivassa, who has been with us during almost the whole of this year, and also Miss Sircar who has been with us since July, and because of their presence we have been able to have as visitors with us several lady doctors and medical students some of whom have been a very great help to us in the hospital, and other lady visitors also who have cheered us by their company and helped us in various ways. As the two little rooms next to the kitchen, (that very poor accommodation which we had set apart for ladies) has proved quite

inadequate, we have just now started the foundation of a carefully thought-out building, to be the house for our women members. And we look forward in faith that God will also lead others to come forward for this work. So far our patients have been without the benefit of any proper nursing and as the present in-patient accommodation (built only as a "chattram" or rest house for relatives of patients) is not suitable for that purpose, we have in mind to put up a small ward for taking such in-patients as are suffering from acute conditions and for whom nursing is an all-important part of their treatment.

But so far the family has rejoiced in having a real "amma" (Tamil for "mother") to care for our creature comforts, and another one to be a "Amma" to our little boys in the children's home and in the school, though their activities have by no means been limited only to these spheres.

There have been many changes in the personnel of the family since we wrote last. We were very sorry that Dhasiah had to leave us at the end of last year. He had thrown himself into the school work and greatly endeared himself to the village children and to our own boys. Moreover he constantly visited their homes in the villages and he is one who understands and has a heart to feel for the villagers in their troubles. He was with us in the Ashram off and on for nearly 7 years, but he was not certain in his own mind with regard to

his future, and as his father had definite plans for him in a different sphere, he was able to come to a definite decision last December. He has been working as Government Temperance Pracharak in Omalur Taluk, near Salem; and as this is not very distant we have had the pleasure of a number of visits from him. Last October he was married at Perambur and several of us, including two of "his boys," were present on that happy occasion. We wish him every blessing in his "grahasthashrama" life!

In January we had a great sorrow in regard to our boy Samuel Devasagayam (alias, Mottayan, who had come to us for amputation of his leg during the first year of the Ashram). For a number of months things had not all been well with him in his spiritual life. We had not been sufficiently watchful in this matter. As he had always proved himself faithful and was very helpful in many ways we continued to place responsibility on him, and so laid him open to temptations more than he was able to bear. For some months it seemed as though the evil one had got the upper hand in his life. But we are thankful that he has gradually been becoming more sensible to higher influences, and in this Miss Taylor and Mrs. Chellasamy of the N.M.S. Ladies Auxiliary at Puram (close to his own village of Andiyoor) with whom he stayed for a time have been a great help to him. A small grocery shop has now been arranged for him in his own village, and for the

past 2 or 3 months he has been looking after this business with great keenness, staying with his mother. While it is painful to us to write about these things we know that many of you are interested in Samuel and will join us in praying for him especially that worldly ambition may not overcome him but that his life may yet be a shining light for Christ among his own people.

There has been also another marriage from the ranks of our family ! K. T. Alexander who had come back to us after his illness last year was with us this year also until May, so completing the three years stay according to his original intention. Of those who have been with us till now he is the first Malayalee who has made himself most at home in the Tamil Nadu ; and, has got a good grasp of our " heavenly language ", (Tamil). He had really devoted himself for our villagers both in ministering to their physical ailments and in bringing them the gospel. He was also keenly interested in the Sunday School for our boys.

He left us in response to his parents, repeated desire that he should be nearer to them. His marriage took place in September. We were sorry that none of us were able to be present, but we none the less sincerely desire God's blessing on his home and the medical and evangelistic work which he expects to take up.

The only one of the old ashram group who is with us is Simon. He had been doubtful for some time as to whether the Ashram was his vocation, but we rejoice that he has been led to continue, and we have a strong hope that he will more and more come to share with us in making the Ashram his home. He has been hard put to it this year filling up so many big gaps. First of all Dhasiah handed over to him the work of Ashram "Post Master Generalship" and then to fill another gap he took over the school for some months, and was also helping Mrs. Shreenivassa with the household. Then he was in charge of the Dispensary and the injection treatment for lepers and others, besides looking after the needs of the medical in-patients, assisting in the operating room. He joins us in sending greetings to many of you whom he knows.

We were very glad to have Sadhu Mathai of Alleppey with us during the greater part of this year. Though he himself would say that his stay had been quite useless for us, that, in fact, he was a member of the R. K. D. (Rice Killing Department), yet how many of us have profitted by his stimulating fellowship, and by quiet talks together, and not least by his prayerful thought and advice! We are very glad that he is now fairly strong and well in body, and has been able to go back to his task of work in Alleppey, and caring for the poor in Shertally.

Who are with us in the Ashram now? Teaching in the school there is first of all, Devapriyam a trained teacher who has taken one year's leave from the Mission School at Arni. He was one of those who came to the village work among the long vacation last year and this year he decided to devote at least one year for the voluntary service at the Ashram. He has been of very great help and has introduced more order and system into the teaching. Along with him for the past 3 or 4 months Devanesan (formerly librarian in Y. M. C. A. Madras) has been teaching chiefly the bigger boys and also conducting the night school for those boys doing industrial work. Recently there has been a repeated request from of some young lads of Konapattu village for a night school and he is now going there and teaching them. (He feels specially called for evangelistic work and is just considering his future course). We hope he may be able to continue with us. Christudas was teaching and supervising the industrial work until July when he had to go to Madras for the one year's Government training course in weaving, but he still pays occasional visits and sees that things are going on properly. At present in this work there are three boys weaving carpets and cloths, and two making reed mats besides the boys in 4th and 5th standard who do part time (1 or 2 hours daily) making bed tape which we use for the hospital beds. There have been a number of others who have also helped for shorter periods in the school, and at present James from Bangalore is with

us. But the work could hardly have gone on satisfactorily had it not been for Miss Sircar who has supervised and directed the whole. She has also recently gone to stay with our little boys — Joseph, Manuel, Manappan and Yesupatham in the children's home. These little ones are very jolly together and developing nicely ; only Manappan seems to be as small as ever. Simon (the biggest of the 3 Elthagiri brothers) in making himself very helpful and looking after some of our cows as well as doing his weaving work. The school boys are just now helping at the ground nut harvest. In the hospital we have had a great many different helpers during the year. At present in addition to Simon there are Dr. George (a Madras L.M.S. from Trichur), P. Y. Abraham who is one of the volunteers in the Palghat work of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church and has come for a little to be able to make himself more useful in rendering first aid and giving some simple medicines to the villagers ; Shunmuga Sunderam from Palamcottah who has come for 3 years training ; and George Devadas (a Nambudhori Convert).

We have also been cheered by visits from two old ashramites, Ganesh and Dhavamony. Ganesh has been for some years in a Chaitanya Math in Calcutta. He stayed at the Ashram for a week or so on his way home to see his people in Malabar and then again returned for some operative treatment and spent about 2 months

with us. He has now taken up a post in Dr. Rama Rao's Health Office in Madras. He is the same gentle loving soul and yet not decided as to his future. Dhavamony has been working in a chemist's firm in Colombo. As he had some leave, he went with his family (for he is married and has also a little daughter) to his father-in-law's house in Kuraikudi where he left them, and came to spend some weeks at the Ashram. He was as helpful as ever, and we were very glad to have him with us, and to renew old friendships.

Again this year during the two months of the long vacation a number of students came to the Ashram and we devoted ourselves to village work with groups in 4 different centres. The first 4 or 5 days were spent at the Ashram and during Easter week end we had some helpful meetings and quiet times for meditation and also united worship in the new House of Prayer though it is yet unfinished. Rev. E. C. Dewick helped us in this. This year our energies were largely given to temperance work and village hygiene (both theoretical and practical) and to medical work though, as before, the main objective was to know the people and their needs and difficulties and to give the gospel message to them both by private talks and by meetings at some of which the magic lantern pictures of the life of Christ and also temperance slides were shown at their own request. We felt that the students should go more in the attitude of learners and witness more by their lives and service

than by mere preaching which the villagers ignore, as mere propaganda for adding people to the "Christian Caste." There was a good response from some of the poor drunkards who took temperance pledges but several weak willed fellows have fallen away. While toddy shops are kept open in all their villages what else could be expected? We found that the villagers in several places were quite keen that the toddy shops ought to be closed. With the help of visits from Mr. Sankara Narayana Iyer the rural uplift work started in Thokkyam and Atchamangalam has been followed up though on our part we have had very little time to give to it. (Several of the students who came were old friends, and it was a real joy to have them and also to get to know other who came for the first time).

During the year a good deal of time has been spent by us in visiting camps for Christian students held in different centres in S. India. Though we see very little result of this in offers for service in the Ashram, we feel that if some, at least have been brought to face seriously the call of sacrificial service in their own localities, these efforts have not been in vain. The difficulties in the way of students devoting their lives to the service of the poor and ignorant in our villages are indeed very many, but perhaps the greatest is just that Christian parents so very seldom send their children for college education with any higher

more than that they may just get a good position for themselves in the world. How great the need for a new understanding of the love of God who "gave his only begotten son....." ! May He turn our ambitions for our children into nobler channels.

Many of you may be wondering how our House of Prayer "Jebalayam" has been progressing. The greatest part of it is now roofed in, but the building work in stone is naturally slow and it may still take about a year for completion.

This letter would be untrue to the truth as it is in India if we do not make any reference to the gloom and sadness we are passing through. The best and the purest of the sons and daughters of India are languishing in prison, and others are passing through a time of mental agony. We both also have come under the kind care of the C. I. D. (secret police) ! We are being shadowed wherever we go, as suspects. Our chief crime seems to be our enthusiasm for temperance work and the encouragement of everything that will help to uplift the poor starving villages that surround us. We do not know what the future may bring forth. But for the faith in a loving Heavenly Father who loves all His children alike whether black or white, we should despair. But He will help.

We do need your prayers first of all that more may respond to the call definitely to devote their lives

for the service of Christ especially as they see Him in the poor in our villages, then for the development of the women's side of the Ashram activities, and lastly for the Ashram family that His constraining love may more and more rule our lives, and His guiding hand may be manifested in giving more definite guidance and direction in our service for Him.

We also would remember you all with thankfulness and joy. With our sincere greetings.

Your friends,

E. FORRESTER-PATON,

S. JESUDASON.

The Christu-kula Ashram,
TIRUPATTUR, (N. A.)

Christmas 1931.

Dear Friends,

We are sorry that a whole year has passed without our having sent out any news to you of the Ashram and God's dealings with us here. But we cannot let Christmas time pass without a letter to renew our fellowship, to assure you of our remembrance of you and to send you our heartfelt greetings.

It is difficult to tell of all that has happened since last we wrote. This is now the tenth year since the Ashram was established and to commemorate the occasion in April we had a little picnic party along with our children and a few old friends from Tirupattur in the garden of the hired bungalow where we first started. This was followed by a service of thanks-giving, praise and prayer. In spite of our blunderings and little faith we have very much to be thankful for, and especially for the way in which God has so wonderfully sent to us fellow-workers to meet the needs of the work. Again and again when the time had come for one or two to leave us and we had been earing how we should be able to carry on, just at the necessary moment the help has come and our little faith has been put to shame.

In the beginning of this year there was a rather serious outbreak of cholera at Adiyoor, a village about 3 miles from us. We were called in to help there by two young men who also brought their cart to take us, and we soon found out that they were members of a "Valiber Sangam," or Young Men's League, in the village. They helped us enormously in attending to the cholera stricken ones and also in our preventive measures. They themselves learned to give the simple medicines and directions, and would come and call us just as there was need for saline injections or other special help. So it was a great joy to get

to know these young men and to work along with them. They are also working for temperance in the village and have got a little reading room where they have some Tamil Newspapers and where they have weekly meetings. We just wish there were more of such groups in the villages as they may mean so much for the future of these places.

At Easter time, Rev. Balasunderam came and gave us some heart-searching devotional talks and also celebrated the Communion with us. Soon after that during the Summer vacation from 21st April till 10th June we had, as in two previous years a group of about 20 students for our village work, and in this some Hindu students also joined. The first week was spent at the Ashram, and several leaders of experience in Rural Uplift work, Mr. Swamidoss and Mr. Stephen both of Y. M. C. A. fame and Mr. Adinarayana Chettiar of the Co-operative Bank movement in Salem as well as our old friend Mr. Sankranarayana Iyer, came and gave us very useful and practical talks. Adiyoor, Achamangalam, Periangaram and Patchur were the chief centres where the groups spent three consecutive periods of 12 days coming back to the Ashram for alternate week-ends. Our greatest difficulty was to get the right leaders for the different groups, but Mr. R. D. Samuel of Madura has again rendered yeoman service, and Mr. (now, Justice) Chenchiah also was able to be here for a short time.

While staying in the villages the students were engaged in rendering simple medical aid under the direction of one of our trained Ashram volunteers treating such simple ailments as malaria, indigestion, wounds, sores etc. They also did house to house visiting making friends with the villagers, playing or swimming with the village children, conducting night schools, or lantern lectures, Kalachepams, (i.e. instructions through songs) etc. Neighbouring villages also were visited. We also tried to reconcile contending village parties, and got the village leaders together to persuade them to go forward with the work of village education, sanitation etc. At one village the huts of several poor people were destroyed by fire. Our men got the leaders together, collected grain and money approached the local Tashildar (revenue officer) for a grant of building materials and so helped the villagers to rebuild their huts. Our men also did temperance work. Poverty, factions, ignorance, drink, and "untouchability" are some of the chief obstacles in village uplift work. Mass education is a very urgent need. At least the very minimum of middle school education through the mother tongue is necessary as the first immediate step in village uplift. Self effort is vital and therefore we tried our very best to get the village leaders together and urge upon them the need for educational and sanitary progress. As for the religious side of the work, we felt our life and service must be made the centre of our witness rather than mere preaching. The students

whose lives had to be lived in all frankness before the villagers among whom they moved practically the whole day, and who were continually watched by them, had to prove their loyalty to their Lord by a consistent Christian life.

In the last month or two as we have a bigger group (about 20 of us) here we have again been more free to go out occasionally to the villages, and we have been trying to co-operate and help somewhat in the Temperance work which is being organised by the National Congress Committee in this area. Volunteers have been enlisted by the Congress, and now almost all the toddy and liquor shops are being regularly "picketted". That is to say any number up to six volunteers stand at a distance not less than 60 feet from the shop on the paths leading to it and speak to those who are making for the shop and try to dissuade them from going in. Naturally such peaceful persuasion is not often successful with the habituals and yet many of them do get ashamed when they have to face it every day and the drinking has been much reduced. Also the very "demonstration" creates strong public opinion against drink by drawing the attention of the people (non-drinkers) to the terrible evils of intoxicants.

This work has been especially successful where some of the leaders in the village have come forward

to take active part in it, but in some places they are rather afraid to do so. Also some get discouraged by the lack of interest and response, and by the opposition which those interested in the trade are not slow to bring to bear against them. Here again is the need for the motive power of the gospel of the righteousness and the love of God. We have also been taking opportunities of giving temperance and gospel talks in the villages, sometimes along with the magic lantern, and some of our older school boys have also helped by their songs and by distributing leaflets.

Some of you know Shunmugha Sunderam who has been here for the past 18 months. For a number of years he has been hearing the call of Christ, and last September at Tuticorin where he had gone to see his mother and relatives, and after talking with them he accepted Him openly in baptism. We did not know that he had been contemplating this step and we are all the more glad that it came entirely from the inner urge within his own heart. He has been very happy with us here, but just today he got news of the death of his mother and he has gone to his home; please remember him.

This year we have had a number of invitations to student camps and retreats. These students camps help us to keep in touch with the younger generation of thinking Christian Indians. Naturally during the

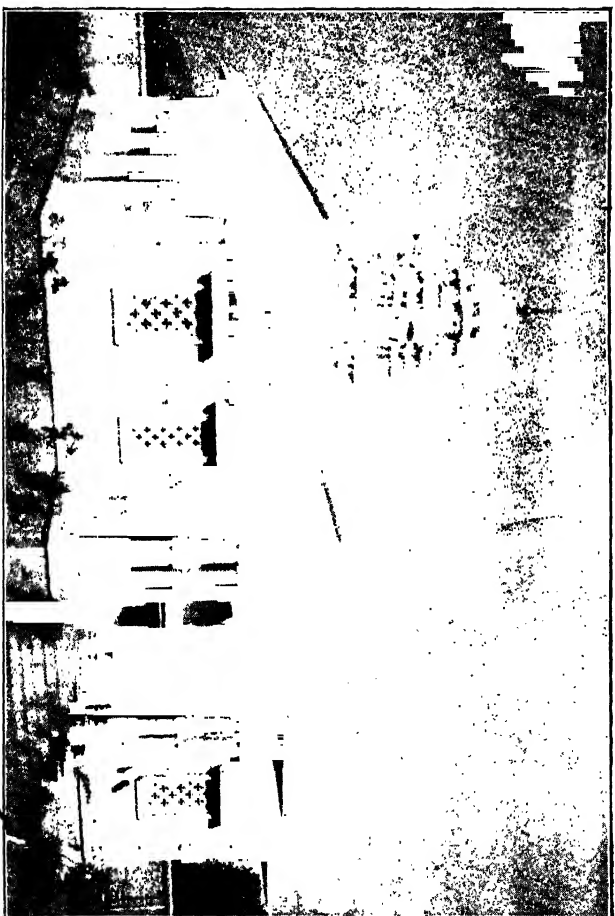
present situation in India, they are all perplexed as to what their duty is as followers of Christ. They share with the rest of their country-men the fervour and longing that their country should take her rightful place among the nations of this world, and that India should come into her own freedom and heritage. Is Christianity opposed to loyalty to one's country? That is the perplexing question that agitates many of them. Both at the Tamil Students' Camp at Nandhil the part that a Christian should take in national movements was very vigorously discussed. The trend of the discussions and the resolutions showed a very strong desire on the part of most of them to try to make their peculiar contribution to and to take their share in the national movement. Gandhiji's personality, his non-violent methods, and the programme of national uplift have appealed to young Christians in India by the very "Christian" note about them.

During this year we have had much help and encouragement from the presence of Mrs. Shreenivasa and Miss Sircar. Miss Sircar was supervising the work of the school and looking after our orphan boys until May. She has now started in her own chosen sphere of work in connection with the N. M. S. at the village of Bethlehem in the Punjab and we are glad to hear from her of the great demands upon her (medical skill!!) and of her joy in the work there. Mrs. Shreenivasa is, planning to stay on with

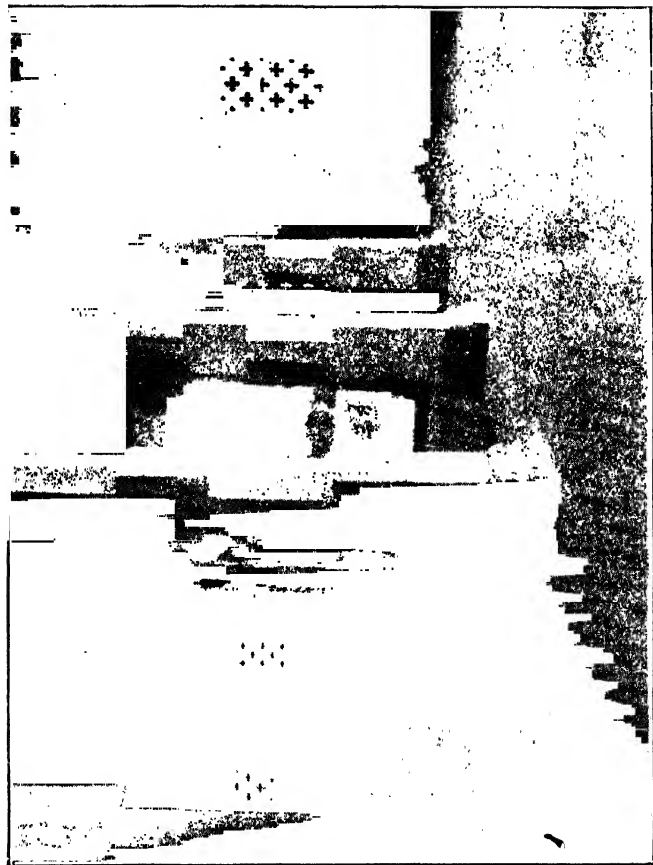
us for a longer period, and we are looking forward in faith for other ladies coming to join her to help us in the school and also for nursing in the hospital. In anticipation for their coming we have been building a Women's Home to provide proper accommodation for them and so that they may have some common life of their own as well as joining in the Ashram life. This building is now nearing completion, and is situated to the South of our new House of Prayer.

The Jebalayam (i. e. House of Prayer) is not yet complete but it is now roofed over so that we have been able to have our worship there for the last six months. At present the masons are just putting up the gopuram (or tower) and also the wall which is to enclose the garden around the building. We trust that it will be finished before the end of next year, and perhaps next Christmas we may be able to have the dedication, when we hope that many of you will be able to be present with us.

After Miss Sircar and Devapriyam left, we naturally felt very anxious as to who would be with us to carry on the school. We made this a matter for special prayer and God has heard us in that there are at present four regular teachers and our old volunteer Dhasiah has also been helping them. In addition to the day school, or rather as an extension of it, we have



Main body of the Jebelayam



Interior of the Jebelaya

started a small industrial school. That is to say the boys who passed the 4th class last year (8 of them) are now living with teachers in the school joining us in our early morning worship, then having 2 to 3 hours for garden or agricultural work, then "conjee" (morning meal) after which they have three periods of regular study until the midday meal; then about 3 hours of weaving followed by some time for recreation, bath, evening food and individual study. They go to bed at 9 p.m. and get up at 4-30 in the morning. Our idea is that in addition to literary education they must keep up their interest in agriculture and also learn a trade which they will be able to use in the dry season when there is no work in the fields. It is an experiment in our own humble way in trying to find a new type of education which will be suitable for the village life. Such types of village education have already been worked out very elaborately at Moga and in other places, but each place has got to find out just what will suit the circumstances and the locality. The weaving instruction has been carried on by Christudas who completed his training in the Government Industrial school in Madras last May. Two of the teachers are also conducting a night school at Konapattu—a village about a mile and a half from the Ashram. Please join us in praying for a consecrated and well qualified teacher who might take the schools as his life work.

In the work of the hospital too we have to be very thankful for the number of volunteers who have been carrying on the work and also for the fact that a number of qualified men have been with us, though most of them have only been able to stay for periods of a few months. Just at present there are three doctors (besides we two) and they have been of very great help and greatly lightened the work for us. The number of our patients has also been increasing so that our accommodation (32 beds including the open air ward) is usually quite full, and a number of others have to take refuge in the mandapam. The relatives of the patients also come and stay with them and as we have no proper kitchen accommodation at present they have cleaned up the ground under a number of the trees along the road-side and do their cooking there. It is a picturesque scene, only when it happens to rain (which it does even in Tirupattur sometimes) they are put to great difficulty. So we are just starting to put up a very simple enclosure with little kitchens around the sides and also some sleeping accommodation and a place for the carts and the cattle, a sort of caravansary in fact. We have to be very thankful that during this time when so much building work is going on we have a recently qualified engineer amongst us to supervise it all.

This has been a year of great hopes and possibilities for India, especially since that victory of goodwill

brought about by the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. We long that all communities may learn to work together for the common good, and in particular that we Christians (instead of seeking for special privileges and representation for ourselves) may be able to express the spirit of Christ in greater sacrifice and service for the poor and suffering, and, by sharing with our non-christian brethren who are already doing uplift work, help to inspire them with the patience, the hope and the perseverance which come from faith in God's righteousness and love.

We remember you all at this time with joy and thankfulness for we know that you are all one with us in a common aim and fellowship, and that many of you are also praying for us. We wish you all, God's rich blessing in your own particular spheres of life and service. May Christ so dwell in all our hearts, that the fragrance of His presence may draw many to Himself.

With our sincere greetings

Your friends,

E. FORRESTER-PATON and S. JESUDASON.

The Christu-kula Ashram,
TIRUPATTUR, (N. A.)

1st February 1932.

Dear Friends,

You might have heard all sorts of reports about what happened to Paton recently. Also many of you have written to us anxiously enquiring about the whole affair. Herewith a part of Paton's statement as recorded in the law Court is sent as it gives an authoratative account of the whole affair in his own words.

" On Thursday, 14th January 1932 I came to Madras at 2-35 P. M. by the Bangalore Express train with the object of finding out in consultation with certain leading citizens of Madras whether there would be a necessity of starting an Emergency Hospital under Christian auspices to afford relief to the injured.

On the same evening I interviewed certain prominent citizens, both Europeans and Indians. On Friday, after interviewing some more, I boarded a bus at Egmore overbridge to go to the Christian College to have tea with some friends and then meet Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastri, C.I.E., Ex-Advocate General by previous engagement.

On the way when the bus was passing Rattan Bazaar Road, I having some time to spare, got down at the Rattan Bazaar Road, to learn first hand what exactly was happening with regard to the picketting

of shops about which various versions have been appearing in the papers. Having got down I walked along Rattan Bazaar Road northwards, turned left along China Bazaar Road, and again turned left along Devaraja Mudali Street, and walked as far as Messrs. Abubucker's Shop and there turned left again. After walking a little distance I again continued along Rattan Bazaar Road to the north until I came nearly as far as Flower Bazaar Police Station.

So far I did not notice anything abnormal. But at that point I saw some police armed with "lathies"* running southwards on the pavement. I turned round southwards and walked along the roadway some yards from the pavement watching what the Police were about to do. There was no crowd at that time nor did I notice any picketters. But the Police were being directed to go into an opening and I also saw a man being dragged out to the same opening by the Police. I did not stop but walked on. As I was doing so a Police Sergeant came up to me and told me to walk on when I replied to him that I was doing so. I continued walking southwards about 50 to 100 yards and then I crossed over the road to the opposite side (by the wall) and began to walk back northwards as I wanted to see what was happening. That part of the road was practically deserted—there was nobody walking along that side of the road.

* Lathies—Stout sticks.

I had gone only a few steps when one of the Sergeants with a lathi in hand went across to me and asked me what I was doing there. Then he asked me if I was an European to which I replied in the affirmative. Then he asked me from what country, to which I replied from Scotland. The Sergeant asked me again what I was doing in that uniform indicating the Khader Vest, and the Khader shirt and the Khader folded upper cloth which I was wearing. This is my usual dress. I had also a sun topi on. I replied to him that I was working among the poor, and that was why I was wearing this dress which is my usual one. Then the Sergeant asked me if I was a missionary to which I replied in the affirmative.

By that time another Police Sergeant had come, and they started beating me with lathies giving me blows, on the back of both hands, on both thighs, and on both shoulders. They also gave a blow on my hat which fortunately did not hit my head.

Then they ordered those in charge of the water cart to start douching me with coloured water which stained my clothes and skin green.

I started limping northwards but one of the Sergeants with his upraised lathi ordered me back to receive a second drenching, with coloured water which was turned on to me with full force. I took shelter between a hand cart standing there and the wall but the

Sergeant had the hand cart removed. Then I continued to walk as well as I could towards the south and the Sergeant did not trouble me further. I was drenched from head to foot which naturally attracted some crowd, but when I was beaten and when the water was turned on me I was quite alone excepting for the two Sergeants and some Police Constables directing the water.

During this whole time I had met nobody whom I knew, nor had I any conversation or communication with any one except one of the Sergeants in answer to his questions as stated elsewhere in the course of this statement.

I am absolutely innocent, a stranger to the volunteers and the picketers and I have nothing to do with them. I can only believe that these high-handed unwarranted acts of the Sergeants were entirely due to the fact that I was wearing a Khader Vesti and a Khader shirt though I had a hat on.

I then went to the Y. M. C. A., building in Esplanade, showed the injuries to Mr. McClelland and several others and after having a change of clothes, went to Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastri with Mr. A. A. Paul to fulfil my engagement and thereafter with them went to Dr. Hogg in the College House and told them all that had happened. While I was in the College House talking to Mr. Hogg, Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastri and Mr. A. A. Paul after tea with them

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two Police Sergeants came there and wanted me to go to Egmore and meet the Commissioner of Police. I was taken by the Sergeants in the bus that they brought and met the Commissioner at his office at Egmore at about 7-30 P. M. and to him also briefly narrated these facts. The Commissioner of Police said that if the facts were as stated by me he was sorry for what had happened but that he would have to make an enquiry. He ascertained that I was living in Mukathal Street and said that Inspector Curry would go and examine me at 9 A. M. the following morning.

On Saturday I was taken from Mukathal Street to the Flower Bazaar Police Station when Mr. Anantha Chari, the Asst. Commissioner recorded my statement in the presence of Dr. Hogg.

At 1 P. M. along with Dr. Hogg I went to the Chief Secretary's Office in the Fort Saint George by previous appointment. While waiting for the interview the Commissioner of Police came outside the Chief Secretary's room and seeing us told me that I was technically under arrest and that I should go to the Commissioner's Office immediately after the interview with the Chief Secretary to give bail. It was then that I knew that the Police, far from taking any action against these Sergeants who had unwarrantedly assaulted me and caused injuries, had actually proceeded against me.

I then went to the Commissioner's Office and there I was bound over on my own recognizance to appear before the Magistrate's Court in Egmore at 11 A. M. on Monday, the 18th inst.

Though I could have filed a complaint against the Police for unlawfully assaulting me with lathies and using criminal force and wrongful restraint, I deliberately refrained from doing so as I did not wish to complicate further the political tension in this country nor to take any step which might seem vindictive as being against my Christian principles. I bear no malice whatever against the Sergeants who beat me as I assume their action was the direct results of orders and powers conferred upon them by those in charge.

I had the charge sheet against me read out in Court and I can only say that I pity the author or authors who have been driven to the necessity of fabricating such a false story in order to support their mistaken sense of prestige.

I emphatically state that at no time (from the time I got down from the bus till my beating and douching was over) was I accompanied by anyone much less by the mythical Congress Volunteers, and it is an absolute falsehood to say that I lectured, that I posted picketers, and that I dissuaded people from going to the shops to purchase foreign cloths."

I got news of what had happened only late on Saturday (16th January) night as I had only then returned after a visit to our Elagiri house. There was also a note from Paton, but just like him he had made very light of the severe beating and douching with coloured water he had received. Early on Sunday morning a crowd of villagers who had heard of the Police assault on Paton turned up at the Ashram anxiously enquiring for him. As I was talking to them a wire came asking me to go to Madras immediately. I rushed off to the Railway Station on a bicycle. The "trial" began on Monday. The Court was crowded with many ordinary common folk besides many friends and several ladies. The second day the Sergeants guarded the doors and would not let the people in. With much difficulty and after some argument only Paton and I could persuade one of the Sergeants to let me inside the Court. The scene was memorable. One of the ladies who heard the charge sheet read against Paton turned round aghast wringing her hands. Another exclaimed "O Justice where hast thou flown!". A youngman exclaimed "How long!" Crowds were waiting outside the Court house just to perform their nameskarams (respects) to Paton. As Paton was permitted to return to the Ashram during the adjournment of the case to the following week, we returned to the Ashram on Wednesday evening. Groups of villagers were

standing waiting to see Paton both inside and outside the Ashram premises. All of us went straight to the "Jabalayam" (prayer house). We sang the Tamil lyric 'Praise the Lord O my soul!'. and then Paton spoke to the people about what had happened to him. He was calm and full of courage and prepared to go to prison should the false charge against him succeed. That week we shall never forget. You know now the latest. The case has been withdrawn by the "crown" without giving any reasons, and Paton has been acquitted. We trust the Government has accepted Paton's version of what has happened as facts and the Police charge false.

But we were not and are not so much interested in the "conviction" or "acquittal". We rejoice that one of us was counted worthy to suffer with the people.* The Cross of Jesus Christ has come to us with a new meaning. We are able to preach Christ crucified with greater conviction and force to our villagers. They understand its meaning more clearly now, for Paton's "folly" (if it be folly) and its consequent suffering were entirely due to his complete identification with the poor of this land. Khader dress is a sacrament to us indicating this fact. We want to push

* The tattered garments and the flattened sun hat all dyed green bear abundant witness to the severity of the assault and indignities he had been subjected to. But what about the many other cases of poor people, who silently suffer even worse things and get neither publicity nor justice!

on with our village work as usual. As arranged last year he expects to sail for Scotland from Bombay on the 11th April. As you would easily guess this letter is entirely my own, and I have not even showed this to Paton as it gives me greater freedom to write.

All of us are doing well and the work is going on as usual.

Love and greetings from your friend,

S. Jesudason.

I regret very much for one omission in this letter. We are very grateful to Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastri C.I.E. ex-Advocate-General, Mr. K. S. Jayarama Iyer B.A., B.L., and to Mr. V. L. Ethiraj, Bar-at-law for the utmost enthusiasm they showed in defending Paton out of sheer love for the public cause and a considerable expense to themselves. It was indeed a labour of love on their part. Their patriotism and zeal for a public cause are highly commendable.

Our grateful thanks are also due to Rev. Dr. Hogg, Principal, Christian College, Madras and to Mr. J. A. David, Bar-at-law for all their valuable help and counsel and to the latter also for his part in the defence.

Thank you also dear friends everywhere who have written to us with so much sympathy.

S. Jesudason.

CHRISTU-KULA ASHRAM,

Tirupattur, (M. A.)

CHRISTMAS 1933.

DEAR FRIENDS,

It is a very long time since we sent you any letter from the Ashram, and many of you must be thinking that we have forgotten you altogether ; well we at least trust that you have not forgotten us.

It is really difficult to know where to begin ; perhaps I (Paton) should tell you a little about the seven months that I spent in Britain last year. It was a great joy for me to visit my sister and brothers and their families. How one's nephews and nieces do grow up during 5 years ! But the joy of their company especially during the Summer holiday time was as real as ever. I had the privilege of attending two of the Student Movement Summer Camps, one at Swanwick in Derbyshire and the other, near Edinburgh, as well as a Summer Conference of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. At all these I found there was a very lively interest in India though very often there was much ignorance of what was really happening and unawareness of the new spirit and awakening which has swept through the country. I was also very glad to find a deepening of religious life among the students. I had also the great privilege of accompanying Mr. C. F. Andrews to a number of meetings about India

which he held in Edinburgh and Glasgow. In London too I met a very fine group of men and women mostly Quakers, who are doing yeoman service in bringing about a better understanding of the Indian point of view among those in high places there. While there is a party of reaction which is very vocal through the press there are also many genuine and understanding friends of India who are seeking to exercise their good influence in a quieter way.

Could anyone go to Britain and miss meeting the Oxford Group people? At any rate I was very glad indeed that they got into touch with me and invited me to one of their "House Parties" at St. Andrews for 4 days. I found a wonderfully real and joyous fellowship there which just reminded me of the Burma Gospel team. It is, I feel sure, a wonderful moving of God's Spirit and I was very thankful to be able to share in it also. On my return journey I spent just over a week in Germany staying with 3 different families all of whom loaded me with kindness. The unemployment and trade depression there is very severe and I was surprised to find that earnest Christians were in favour of giving Hitler's policy a trial as they felt he was the only one with some definite solution to offer and one who would counteract the influence of Communism; *I wonder what they are

*Since writing this we have a letter from our dear friend Dr. Hans Heufelder of South Germany that he strongly feels that Hitler is the right man for Germany now. (S.J.)

thinking about things now. But it is impossible for any of us to judge a country from the outside newspaper reports.

I also found in Britain quite an interest among the younger people in the Ashram way of life and work, and met several who were anxious to join this form of service though I did not in any way try to win recruits. Quite by chance as it might seem I was brought into contact with a young friend from Glasgow, Frank Brown by name, and also his father and mother. He had already applied to go as a missionary to Africa but there was no opening there for him, and when he heard about the Ashram, he felt that was a kind of work he longed for and his parents too gladly consented to his coming as a trial for a period of three years. Frank has served his apprenticeship in a motor company in Glasgow, but his greatest qualification is just his love for boys and his gift of moving with them in Sunday School and Scouting. It was very nice to have him with me on the return voyage, and we also enjoyed on the boat the company of Brothers George and Bill Lash of the Poona Ashram.

. When we arrived, some of the Ashram brothers came to Jalarpet to meet us and it was indeed a joyful reunion. At the Ashram itself I was greatly touched by the simple affection of our village neighbours who had come together to give us a royal welcome. We all went together to the House of Prayer to praise God for

His wonderful goodness to us. The majority of the Ashram family whom I had left behind were with us still. Our former Ashram Engineer Vedam and also Perumal have now taken up work at Secundrabad. Mathew is working as a dispenser at Jamshedpur. Sathiamurthi is studying in the training school at Palamcottah. Simon was just finishing his course in Laboratory work at Mañanapalli where I also spent a few days with him before he returned to the Ashram. We are sorry he is no longer with us, but he is doing good work in the Ranipet Mission Hospital which is not very far away, so that we are able to meet occasionally.

Of those who have been in the Ashram for some time you will be glad to know that Mrs. Shreenivasa is with us still and is more than ever a mother to us all, and helps us in so many ways. She, along with Miss Moses (from Trivandram) and Rajammal, are now comfortably settled in our Ammat Veedu, or women's home, which is built somewhat to the South of the Chapel‡. Devanbu, Esaudas, Shanmuga Sunderam,

†Amma = Mother. (S. J.)

‡Our long felt desire for the development of the women's side of the work has not yet been realized. A work like that of the Ashrams in India must necessarily first find its women leaders and pioneers from among devoted Indian Christian sisters and then it can welcome women workers from other lands. We trustfully look to God to fulfil this longing of ours and send us the right kind of sisters to cooperate with us in the development of this part of the Ashram family and its activities.

musician Prakasam (George), and Amos have been doing good work in the hospital, along with Drs. Ross and Philip whom some of you know. Enoch and Teddy (David) who were with us before are again with us, and they as well as Packiam, and Iyadurai are faithfully carrying on the work of the School for the village children. Devadas is now working as writer to St. Mark's Church at Bangalore. Sundar Rao looks after the library and the Ashram Post Office. Gnana-nandam who left for some months of evangelistic work in the South is now with us, and is helping in the agricultural work. We are very glad also to welcome John, Varki, Sanandam, and Swamidoss, who have come more recently. At present our family numbers about twenty as a rule.

Since our last circular letter there have been several additions to our activities. On the opposite side of the road facing the hospital we have built a chatram or rest-house. This is a very simple structure built round the four sides of a spacious court-yard, and provides cooking accommodation and shelter for the relatives of the patients in the hospital. It is also being used to house a number of patients who are not so seriously ill and for whom there is no room in our regular Wards. This has led to some increase of the medical work, and we are very glad that these poor folks from distant villages have now a place for themselves which we also try to teach them to keep clean

and tidy though this is a never-ending lesson. We have also installed a simple septic-tank latrine for them which they are learning to use.

Paton has been touring in North India and Bengal since last September on a mission to the Christian churches along with Bishop Abraham and brother Joseph John. He has sent me the preceeding part of this letter from Patna. It is not easy to write a joint circular letter while we are both separated by a distance of about a thousand miles. But as you might want some news straight from the Ashram I (Jesudason) am also adding something to this letter.

Those of you who have been receiving the Tamil circular letters would have read all about our village work in the Summer months of 1932-33, but for the sake of our non Tamil friends, I should like to repeat here again what has already appeared in the Tamil letters. Several students from Colleges and High Schools came to the Ashram for village work. Last year we followed the usual plan of locating the students in small groups in different village centres, the students themselves doing their own cooking, washing etc. As this method seemed not satisfactory owing to the amount of time taken up in cooking, and also owing to lack of sufficient leaders to advise and direct the groups, we changed our method this year. All of us were staying together at one central village

namely Madavalam. From here we went out in little groups of three or four every morning, each group visiting the same village every day rendering simple medical aid, making friends with the leaders and studying the sanitary, economic, educational and such like conditions and needs of village. We returned to our central village in the evenings for rest and fellowship and to compare notes with one another, sharing our experiences together. Last year, Vajiravelu Gounder a leading villager of Madavalam, presented us with about half an acre of land in a very central spot for building a branch Ashram. We have built here a simple three roomed building to serve as a branch Ashram. It is here that we stayed.

On the day that we went out first to this branch Ashram Justice P. Chenchiah and Visalakshi Ammal (our Indian Music teacher) also accompanied us. As soon as we approached the village, the village bhajan party came out to meet us with music and singing, and we all went in a procession to our branch Ashram building. The villagers had gathered there in a large crowd, and after Visalakshi Ammal had led us in singing to the accompaniment of her Veena, a few of us addressed them on topics concerning their welfare.

For a long time I had been going to visit the hill people of the Javadi range of hills about ten

miles from the Ashram. These hills extend for over a distance of twenty miles and I believe there are over seventy five villages scattered over these hills. The opportunity for visiting these people came this year.

We started on foot one evening from our branch Ashram, spent the night in a village near the foot of the hills, and next morning we began our climb up the hills. Our first aim was to camp in the village of Sherkannur. Not finding any suitable place to lodge in we (the students and myself numbering about twelve of us), began climbing up still further hoping to reach Pudur which was still higher. But Pudur seemed ever to elude our reach and we trudged on and on all forenoon and afternoon (most of us carrying some burden or other) until after four o'clock when we reached the forest house at Pudur. Our company was so exhausted and tired that several of us took to bed and soon went off to sleep without even caring for any food ! But two of our number whom nothing seemed to tire out had not only been trying to rescue a bull that had fallen into a ditch on the way, but also set to work immediately after arrival, carried water up from a well in a valley and refreshed the rest of us with some hot coffee.

We spent about a week among these hill people visiting daily four villages in the neighbourhood rendering simple medical aid for those in need. The

hill people (who are known as Malayalees here ; Malai—hill ; Aal—person) are very simple Tamil folks and we soon became their friends. They were very poor but were friendly and gladly willing to share with us what simple things they had such as milk and jack fruit.

As far as I know no missions or any philanthropically minded organisations or persons have so far made any effort for the uplift of these hill people. The only Government officers that deal with them belong to the forest department and our impression was that these hill people seemed to dread them ! There was only one solitary school conducted by a "Malayalee" teacher and we found him fast asleep the pupils all shouting together their lessons at the top of their voice ! The people were religious minded in their own way, and we saw some fine little temples built by them at very beautiful spots surrounded by lovely natural sceneries. Owing to poverty and lack of proper water supply they seemed to be of feeble constitution. Malaria and hookworm seem to be the prevalent diseases, but they were personally clean and the village streets and houses presented a tidy appearance.

Our hope about the branch Ashram at Madavalām is that it should be a village centre from which light and life shall joyously radiate to the villages around, specially

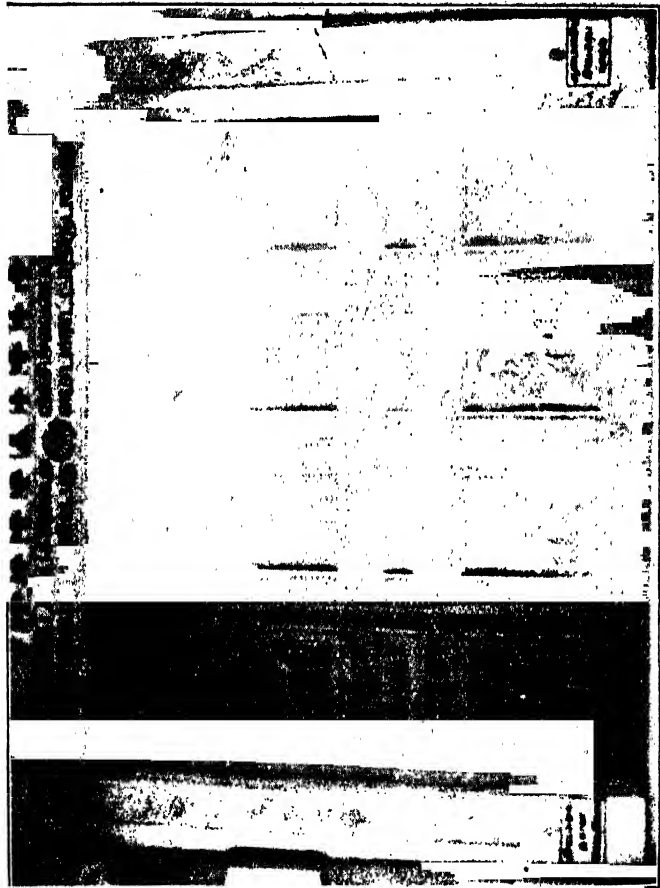
to those simple hill people. May God raise up faithful men and women who shall be true and loving servants of these simple folks!

Our Ashram Jebalayam (House of prayer) was completed last June. As many of you know, architecturally it is built in the form of a South Indian Hindu Temple. There are two gopurams (towers) one over the mugathuwaram (front entrance gate) and another over the moolasthanam (the chancel). There are walls enclosing the central temple all round, and in the rectangular enclosure within (Praharam), there is a flower garden* which is intended for purposes of quiet meditation. From the front gate right up to the front portico-like mandapam of the temple, there is a stone pavement, (where also on moon light nights we have our Intercessory Services) with two stone built water tanks (8 feet by 8 feet) on either side, and two more masonry built ones beyond these in which lotuses are grown. Then there is the main mahamandapam practically open on all sides where the worshippers sit during divine service facing the raised moolasthanam on which a marble artistic slab with a cross stands on a stone-altar. On the beam in front of the moolasthanam is inscribed this verse in Tamil — "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Jesus Christ

*The flowers had been attracting the bees which had built four bee-hives, and as we were warned that these were wild bees whose stings (in large number) would be fatal, we had a tough job, clearing the Jebalayam of these very persistently returning bees !



The Jebalaya as a whole seen from the front.



Carved door separating the Moolasthanam or Sanctuary
of our Ibalayam (House of Prayer.)

my Lord". Excepting during times of divine service the moolasthanam is closed by folding doors of wood work with beautiful and suggestive pictures or flowers skilfully worked in by a local carpenter. All this architecture and wood work etc. in this Jebalayam have been carried out by men, who are not "educated" in the modern sense of the term, and yet, to me this whole edifice is a clear proof that literacy and culture need not necessarily go together. I am discovering that cultured people need not be literate, and literate people can be very uncultured ! We had first intended to have the dedication of the Jebalayam on September 24th, but as Paton had to go to North India, the function had to be dropped. However, we had our regular monthly service for the villagers at the Jebalayam on that date and sang also the special dedication song composed for the occasion.

I have been trying to make our morning worship as truly Indian as possible as I feel that one important function of this Ashram should be to make Jesus Christ as one of our own and not a foreigner to the people around. Three more Tamil books have also been published this year—one on Ashram and how to adapt their principles to modern conditions and life, another a supplementary song book, and the third, a prayer book to guide our morning worship.

We are all getting on well at the Ashram. Ross, Sanandam and Swamidoss are spending certain

days of the week at Madavalam branch Ashram. The other brothers go in different groups every Sunday to appointed villages near by, and try to do their bit in helping the people. The different activities of the central Ashram keep us busy on the other days of the week.

The School has been growing and there are now more than fifty on the roll including twelve boarders. But all the children are given a free meal at mid-day along with the boarders. The standard of teaching has been greatly improved by the present staff. Again and again while we have been doubting where the next year's staff was to come from, God has wonderfully answered our prayers so that this year we have one trained teacher Packiam and two B. A.s in addition to Iyadurai.

Some of the senior boys who have left our school are now conducting Night Schools for the benefit of their less fortunate brethren in the villages around. Packiam (himself a trained teacher) is conducting a weekly training class for the benefit of these teachers. The afternoon weaving classes were being conducted until recently by Periasami, a professional weaver. He came to us first as a patient having had his leg broken by Police lathi-charge while going on the streets of his village singing National Songs. After he was cured he remained with us as a Weaving Teacher in the school.

for nearly a year and a half. Although he has now gone to his own village the senior boys are now carrying on the weaving work. In the mornings after early morning worship they are engaged in vegetable gardening. Some other boys are learning manual work under Frank Brown our present Ashram "engineer" at our workshop.

Some of you medical friends might be interested to hear a little of our Hospital work. One forenoon an old man of over 70 years of age was brought in a most precarious condition. He had been goaded in his abdomen by a stud bull the previous night. Quite a good length of his bowels had come out. He quietly went to bed and as he was staying alone in a farm shed some distance away, none of his people had discovered this until next morning. We had little hopes of his recovery. But we could not leave him in that pitiable condition. The bowels were coming out more and more as the man was very restless moving and turning about. We warned the relatives of the terrible seriousness of his condition, and after prayer operated on the man, cleaning the parts with warm sterilised saline and returning the bowels with much difficulty. The man began to improve the very next day making little of what had happened to him. He got quite well and went home happily. How wonderful is God's gracious kindness to these poor simple people !

We had several cases of Tetanus, almost all recovering. Fractures (often compound) and injuries due to accidents of all sorts often fill our surgical wards. These accidents are mostly due to poverty, people falling from a tree while cutting firewood or falling into unprotected wells while drawing water, and so on. As usual at this cold weather with its heavy dew we have had also several cases of influenza.

Paton has been developing the Eye work so that we have had several cataract and other successful eye operations.

In the Hospital work we feel a great deal of our burden taken off by the help of our trusty and understanding comrades Drs. Ross and Philip, who have now been with us for two years.

Last August both Paton and I addressed some meetings at a camp for High School boys at Courtallam, a place of lovely water Falls and also spoke at a college students' camp at Cape Comorin, the picturesque southernmost point of India. I also visited some places of historical interest in the South, specially from the point of view of the early history of Christianity in the Tamil country.

We are hearing very good news from Paton about the success attending their work among the Christians in North India. He is also speaking at

the All India Quadrennial Christian Students' Conference at Allahabad during Xmas week. We hope to have him back with us here about the end of this month.

We are thankful to the several visitors and friends who have come to us from time to time and encouraged us in this life and service.

We are also very thankful to all the friends* who have written to us (and we fear, often not received any answers!) and we feel sure that you will all continue to cooperate with us in praying for God's blessing on the Ashram family and the service we seek to render in His name.

We rejoice that while the number of the family have grown the spirit of good fellowship has also been growing. This we feel sure has been due to more prayer both individually and occasionally in little informal groups. We long that such experience of the power of prayer and the joy of spiritual fellowship may increase far more and for this cause we would also ask you to join with us in your intercession.

With our loving Christmas greetings and

best wishes for 1934,

Ever your friends,

S. JESUDASON and E. FORRESTER-PATON.

Subjects for Intercessions.

- (1) That God may send us the right kind of men and women (especially a lady doctor and a nurse) who are really inspired by their love and devotion to Christ and for the poor villagers around us.
 - (2) That a devoted soul with teacher training may be led to take upon himself more permanently the burden of developing our school along lines which will meet the needs of our village children.
 - (3) For a trained agriculturalist who would devote himself to help the villagers and develop our Ashram lands.
 - (4) For guidance in the right development of our village work both evangelistic and social, especially for the setting apart of two brothers to work at our Madavalam branch Ashram and for extending our work to the Javadi Hills.
 - (5) For two who are seriously thinking of associating themselves for a longer period with the Ashram, that the difficulties in their way may be removed.
-

Christu-kula Ashram,
Tirupattur; (N. A.)

Christmas 1934.

Dear Friends,

How quickly the Christmas tide comes round again and we here in the Ashram would renew again with you those links of love and friendship and send you our hearty greetings and thoughts of peace and goodwill. May Christ manifest Himself in fuller measure to each one of us at this time, and not to us alone but to great multitudes, so that the nations and classes separated from one another by fear and greed may be brought under the sway of His love and peace!

You will be glad also to know something of the Ashram news, this year I (Paton) have to write myself as Jesudason is away on a world tour and now expects to return only about the beginning of February. To some of you he must already have sent a circular letter telling of some of his doings in Japan, America, Britain and Europe, and we are very thankful that he has met everywhere with such cordial receptions not only from friends, but also companions of the way who have now become friends. But you may perhaps be wondering what was the purpose of undertaking such a journey or what connections it has with our Ashram

life. One of the ideals with which we started to work, was of an international fellowship linked together by a common loyalty to Christ. This could not be realised in an Ashram localised in one particular language area, and we both felt that to one of us particularly (i. e. to Jesudason) this gift of forming friendship in a wider circle had been entrusted. So he set out last April with the longing to bring to those whom he might meet in other lands a truer knowledge and understanding about India, so that new links would be forged that should bind us together in mutual respect, and be a balm for those wounds already created by racial pride, fear and oppression. The letters that we have been receiving from him week by week amply show that God has been answering our prayers in this matter and we trust that when he returns he will also bring back to us here a clearer vision and better understanding of those countries to which he has gone. As a surgeon he has naturally been interesting himself in seeing the work done in many large hospitals and in taking note of the advances of modern surgery but that has never been the primary object of this tour. The latest news of him is from Britain where he has been visiting a number of student centres according to an itinerary worked out for him by the Student Christian Movement. I am sure that many of you are already praying for him and will continue to pray that he may return to us here refreshed both in body and spirit.

When Gandhiji promised in the beginning of this year to include a visit to our Ashram in his South Indian Tour there was great excitement and expectancy. Owing to the exigencies of the tour the day of his coming had to be altered more than once, but he did not disappoint us though he could spare but four hours from about 5 to 9 P. M. on the 18th February. As soon as he arrived (along with a number of his associates) his simple evening meal of fruit, goat's milk, honey etc. was prepared and served to him by Mira Ben (Miss Slade) and while he was eating, sitting on a cushion on our upstairs verandah he was also having, an important interview with Miss Muriel Lester. Then we took him to the platform which we had prepared for him at the junction of the two roads leading to the Jebalayam (chapel) and there he addressed a large and orderly crowd (probably about 2,000) of the villagers who had assembled to get his ' Darshan ' He spoke to them and Jesudason interpreted into Tamil so that all could hear and understand. Very feelingly he urged them to get rid of the blot of untouchability and told of how they must make this practical in the villages. Then he spoke of the calamity caused by the great Earthquake in Bihar and Nepal and appealed to them to give whatever they had for these two great causes. The villagers had not come prepared for any collection, and it was a spontaneous offering containing many widow's mites as well as larger gifts that

they pressed forward to hand over to him, for the one cause or the other. It was with some difficulty that we were able to get him back to the central building as there were many who continued to break through to fall at his feet (which distresses him much). He had a little time for rest on the upper terrace : and then a long talk with Jesudason and myself concerning our Ashram aims in relation to other people's religious beliefs. Could we not, he urged, be content to give the witness to Christ by our lives alone, as words were always inadequate and often misleading as they expressed either too little or too much? We tried to make clear to him that we could be true to the revelation and life that Christ was giving to us, only as we gave expression to it *both* by deed and word. Gandhiji's conviction is that different temperaments naturally will have widely different apprehensions of truth, suited to their particular needs and that no one should interfere with another's religious convictions. He does not admit that God has revealed Himself to the world in an altogether unique way in Christ, nor that He is the Saviour for *all* men. While we could not agree with Gandhiji in this matter, yet we feel that his emphasis on expressing the gospel in transformed lives is most necessary, as so many of us Christians seem to have forgotten the high calling to which we were called. After our private talk the whole Ashram family assembled on the terrace around

Gandhiji. A member had questions to ask him especially with regard to his relationship to Christ, and in reply he told us very frankly that, Christ *as a person* means nothing in his life, but that it was His teachings that had been so valuable and precious for him. I have perhaps put the case rather badly, but I trust that Gandhiji will not feel that I have mis-interpreted him. We do see in him one who has in a wonderful measure embodied these moral teachings in his daily life : why then do we Christians fall so far short ? May it not be because very many of us have never known the power of the life linked with Christ (i.e. surrendered to Him), and after trying to follow the moral teaching in our own strength, have given it up as an impossible task ? Before Gandhiji left the Ashram he joined us in prayer in the Jebalayam where we sang " When I survey the wondrous cross," and a Tamil lyric, and repeated the Lord's prayer. He then left by motor to catch the Madras Train at Jalarpet. It was indeed a great experience for us all to come into contact with his personality at one and the same time so understanding of others and yet so candid and clear in his own convictions. But his visit also made it quite clear to us that there was no possibility of compromising his attitude to Christ and our own.

Father Jack Winslow arrived in the Ashram almost at the same time as Gandhiji, and it was a great joy to have him with us for the two

following days. He told us so simply and beautifully of the new things that God had been showing him and doing in his life, and of the new joy and power to help others that had come to him through more complete surrender, honest sharing of inner experiences with others, and expecting and obeying God's guidance. These had begun to come to him about two years ago and had been very much strengthened by contact with the Oxford Group Movement. Though his visit was short he was able to have quiet talks with a number of us and several of us received new strength from God for our own lives.

During the hot weather this year I was at Kodai-kanal along with Mr. Sanjivi Rao and Bishop Abraham, staying in a very beautiful place out near the golf links and not far from the Pillar rocks. During the first ten days of May we had also the privilege of joining in the Summer Ashram which had been planned by Dr. De Boer and others there. Our numbers were not large but it was a very close and happy fellowship of Indian and European. We had our regular times for worship together, private devotion, manual service, conference and hard thinking as well as enjoying the beauty of nature around us.

For the village vacation service there were only 8 volunteers this year. But they were all keen fellows and we were drawn into close fellowship together both

in prayer and service. The first week was planned to be spent in preparation at the Ashram and though this was interrupted by an urgent call for help in severe outbreak of cholera at a hamlet 8 miles away, that itself proved to be a fine test and preparation for our other service. Then three weeks were spent in the villages around our branch Ashram at Madavalam which we used as our centre. During the last two weeks we were able to stay for a number of days in the villages themselves, first at Bommikuppam and then at Kadirampatti, and this we found to be a better means of getting into touch with the people than returning each night to our Madavalam Ashram. Altogether 16 villages were visited, most of them repeatedly, and we were able to make a large number of friends and to learn much about village life, the great differences there are between village and village, the crushing poverty, the load of debt and above all the urgent need for service. You may ask, what practical service we were able to render? Not very much we have to confess, probably the greater part was done by personal contacts, and in talks to small groups on matters social, educational, hygienic and religious. After dark we had lantern lectures with slides on village hygiene, on the Life of Christ and the parables. In several places we found people very receptive to the message of the gospel and a number of gospel portions were sold. Gnananandam also came and helped us by

giving some kalashapams which were much appreciated. After one week end spent together at the Ashram, we went for 3 days of retreat to our forest cottage on Elagiri Hill ; and we thank God for the joy and blessing of renewed dedication which He gave us there.

We are very thankful that our village work around Madāvalam has not been limited to the few vacation weeks. Dr. Ross, Swamidass and Jaganathan have been going there regularly for a few days each week, and since Sanandham has returned to us in September he has made the branch Ashram his regular abode only returning here for 2 days in the week, and several of us by turns, have been staying with him. He has been organising a league of service for the villagers with monthly meetings which are well attended by men and also a few women. He has very actively kept in touch with all the friends there and has also encouraged the people to concerted action. In this way a petition was sent to Govt., to abolish the Toddy shop and another to the Harijan Seva Sangha for help in repairing a well in one of the Harijan villages. The dispensary treatment of minor ailments goes on regularly, and the Ashram also forms a centre where people drop in to have talks in the evenings. Sanandham is making a regular survey (social, economic and religious) of the neighbourhood, which we trust will be a guide for our future work.

Around our main Ashram also we have been doing regular village visiting, groups of two or three of us taking responsibility for individual villages. As the majority of children as well as grown-ups are busy during the day, we have realised the need of well run night schools. There are at present four night schools which are running with fair success, one at Jodimangalam in a small but neat hut put up largely by the people themselves, and here Jaganathan goes regularly and teaches. Swamidass is running a school in a Harijan settlement to the north of us. At a village of Kurumbers (shepherd people) Gnananandam has been going regularly, teaching with the help of a magic lantern with Daniel's slides on two days in the week. About 15 are studying regularly here. And at Achamangalam a night school has been carried on very faithfully by a young Harijan, Narayanan. This he has done without any help from us, except in so far as we have tried to encourage him by our visits and also by collecting a little money for oil for his lamp. There are several fine young Harijan lads studying there, but few are regular in their attendance. We have also started a villagers' meeting every Full-Moon Wednesday (i. e. Wednesday before each full-moon) where a good number come together to talk over their live problems with us. We hope that this will be a great help in getting to really understand their mind, in creating a feeling of unity among them,

in the Taluk. He is also teaching some of our school boys simple mechanical work, and two of them are regularly working as apprentices under him in the workshop and in the engine room

Gnananandam is looking after our lands and the agricultural work very efficiently being an agriculturalist by upbringing, though he has had no special training. He shares with the labourers in the hard work, understands their problems, helps to settle their quarrels and is ever thinking out ways of improving their economic condition. He has got a gift for Tamil poetry and for producing Kalashapams, (*i.e.* stories and moral truths told in the form of song) he is especially helpful in giving the gospel to the villagers in ways they can understand.

We have had some visitors who have in a special way contributed to our life this year. Of them we are specially grateful to Bishop and Mrs. Packenham Walsh who conducted a retreat for us, as well as to our old friends Bishop Abraham, Mr. Sanjivi Rao, Sadhu Matthai and Mr. Chakkarai.

Though I am not sending any separate list of subjects for prayer, yet as you have been reading through this letter you yourselves will have realised some of those things upon which we are seeking God's help and guidance, and we depend upon you to join us in our intercessions. We have had a year of very

happy fellowship, but we do long for the growth of that deeper fellowship in Christ which alone can make us effective witnesses to His love and saving power. May the New Year bring with it both to you and to us a new experience of Christ's transforming power in our lives !

Your friend, .
ERNEST F. PATON.

CHRISTU-KULA ASHRAM

(Family of Christ Ashram)

Tirupattur, S. I. Ry.,

North Arcot District, S. India.

Christmas 1935 and New Year 1936.

DEAR FRIENDS,

We must first of all apologise to you especially those in other lands for not having sent you any news of the Ashram since last Christmas, yet though we have been so remiss in writing to you we feel sure that you have been thinking of us and upholding us in your prayers. But this season reminds us that we should not allow our spiritual fellowship and goodwill to remain without some tangible manifestation. Even as God's great love

to us had to express itself in outward form, so too we would in some very very feeble measure echo back that love of His in this little token of our affectionate greetings to you.

He who came as a babe on that first Christmas is still seeking to take up His abode in our midst and still even His own folk for the most part have not welcomed Him. May He inspire in us that humble faith so that we may more really than before know that He has made us His children, and may rejoice in His abiding presence and transforming power in our lives !

Our Ashram family has been growing, and as some of you may like to have a look at us, we are sending you our last group photograph. This was taken in the beginning of November when we had with us our good friends, Bishop Abraham, Dr. and Mrs. Mason Olcott and Mr. Ralph Keithan. You will see a number of new faces in the group, and of these several are students who have come to be with us for 3 years to learn compounding and the care of the sick, as well as to take their part in the life and service here. We are very thankful that there are also with us those who have grown into a very close relationship with us and have become an intimate part of the Ashram family, and we are trusting that God will lead some of them to find their life work here.

Only our Ashram children (Yesupatham, Manuel and Manappan) have not been included in the group photo. This year we have an addition in a bright little fellow called Rathinam. They all live along with the 8 village boys who are boarding in the school under Timothy's care, but during the weekends they stay and have their food with us.

We are thankful that this year our elementary school for the villagers has five regular teachers and especially that Timothy who was headmaster last year has been able to continue with us. The number of pupils has also increased so that there are 72 on the rolls. It is rather wonderful too that this increase in numbers is largely due to the Kurumbers of shepherd caste. They were formerly very much afraid of their children mixing with those of the so-called depressed classes but have now overcome that fear. There are also a few other caste children and two or three Mohammedans who are attending regularly. We have no proper weaving teacher at present but one of the Adi-Dravida boys, who got his weaving training with us is doing regular weaving for us, and also supervising the tape and mat looms and the spinning done by the other boys. In this way all the older children are busily engaged in hand work for about one hour every day after the midday meal. The tapes and mats are used for our hospital beds and the 'veshtis' and cloth

woven are finding a ready sale among the villagers so that the industrial work is really paying for itself.

The girls have been having a regular sewing class taken by Amma (Mrs. Shreenivasa) and some of the boys have been very proud to have their clothes mended by them. Work in the vegetable garden has also been kept up, and our best results seem to be with tomatoes which grow very plentifully. We have applied to the Government for recognition of our school and this has been granted from next school year.

There are now three night schools within a mile radius of the Ashram, each of these is conducted by two volunteers who go out at 7 P. M. and carry on till about 9 P. M. It was difficult to arouse sufficient interest in the villagers at first but we are glad that they are now showing a growing keenness to learn, and it is no small thing for young lads, and some children too, after a long day's work to spend two hours in acquiring the 'Three R.s.' We also visit these schools regularly with the magic lantern and give them teaching in hygiene, temperance and general subjects and also in the Life of Christ.

This year we have been trying to begin a little demonstration work in agriculture and village industries. On our land to the North of the road by the windmill is our water-tank building and in that Jesudason has been busy collecting articles for a village industries'

museum and along with it a Tamil Library for the villagers and a play-ground. In the adjacent fields we have had a good result from improved method of paddy planting and we are also experimenting with the growing of soya beans which we hope may prove a very nutritious addition to the village diet. We have started poultry breeding with white Leghorns and we have found some villagers quite keen to get the eggs for hatching out themselves. We also had three hives of bees and were getting some honey, but alas owing to the ravages of the wax-moth two out of the three hives have deserted. We have recently got a Sindhi breeding bull in addition to our old Kangayam bull, and these are often in requisition by the villagers.

At our branch ashram at Madavalam village, Sanandham has been the most regular resident. He, along with others of us, has been trying, though not always successfully, to get the co-operation of the villagers in several reforms. The meetings of the Village Uplift Society continue to be well attended. The most hopeful feature is the number of young men and boys who frequent the Ashram, and a few of them also attended the morning and evening prayers.

While thinking about the villages we would also like to mention about the work that Frank Brown has been doing for the village boys through the Scout Movement. It has not been merely by propaganda or organising

but he has got a real gift for this kind of work and has been able to inspire others with the same keenness. We sometimes make fun of him for his broken Tamil but he has so given himself to the boys that they understand him and he them. He has also been doing many useful jobs for us in the Ashram workshp. We shall miss him when he returns to Scotland next March.

It was in February that Jesudason arrived back from his tour around the world and we were delighted to welcome him renewed also in health and strength. I had the joy of meeting him at Colombo and we travelled back together to Tirupattur. Some of you must have already got his little book "Diary of a World Tour" but any who have not and wish a copy can get one by writting to the brother in charge of the sale of the Ashram publications. While mentioning this you may also be interested in the "Life of Col. Weerasoorya" (late of the Salvation Army) which Jesudason has brought out in English.

Soon after Jesudason's return we were able to decide upon a plan for an extention for our hospital. The present accomodation that we have for in-patients is not only insufficient but also inconvenient as it was originally planned for a chatram (*i.e.* rest-house) and not for wards. So we are putting up some small wards which we hope to use for such patients as are suffering from acute trouble or after operation where they will

receive more careful attention and also, we trust, good nursing, as we are looking to God to supply the nurses. So we expect to have ten additional beds each for surgical and medical patients and eight for eye cases. This new building is also to include a new Operating Theatre, X-ray room and laboratory. The building work has been going on since April with interruptions but is only half completed as yet.

Meanwhile the present hospital beds (34) have been kept very fully occupied and there are as a rule a number of additional patients who have to be relegated to the 'chatram' (rest-house) on the northern side of the road which was built for the relations of the patients to stay and do their cooking.

This year there have been outbreaks of Cholera in a number of villages in the taluk and in Tirupattur town it has been almost endemic. The villagers usually run to us for help and we go out by turns with the saline apparatus and give them intravenous saline in their own huts. We also instruct them how to boil their water and in other ways to protect themselves and we disinfect the wells if the Health Inspector has not already done so. So usually the infection has been quickly got rid of. In one village Muthampatti, the outbreak became severe and for four days we had to go and camp in the school there. The villagers were very much encouraged by our stay with them at a time when

they were full of fear and sorrow and before we left they all gathered together and made a collection. They listened very attentively as we explained to them why Cholera had come to their village and how they could prevent it in future. They also asked us to show the magic lantern pictures of the life of Christ which we did and also prayed with them to God for his healing and protecting power.

You will be glad to hear that our Out-Patient Leper treatment clinic is being increasingly made use of. Every week on Tuesday afternoons about 140 lepers come in from their villages and get the Hydrocarpus Oil injections and other treatment. The majority of them are in the early stages of the disease and are greatly benefitted by the treatment, in fact many of them you could not tell were lepers except by careful examination. Dr. Philip has taken over this work and is carrying it on very systematically and has also visited a number of the villages from which the lepers come to do preventive work and propaganda on the spot.

Dr. Ross and Dr. Philip have more and more been taking over the burden of looking after and making arrangements for the hospital work and we rejoice to see the quiet and orderliness of the out-patients and the improvement in the regular care of the in-patients. We had also the great privilege of having

Dr. Miss Gibbons (of the American Arcot Mission Hospital, Madanapally) with us for one year and you can understand what a great difference that made for the comfort and happiness of the women patients. The quiet cheerful way in which she undertook all sorts of work was an inspiration to many of us. We were all sorry when she had to return to her work at Madanapally at the beginning of November.

Amma (Mrs. Shreenivasa) and Miss Moses are now the sole occupants of our Amma Veedu (Ladies Quarters). We were sorry Amma had to be away for a period for reasons of health, but we were very glad to welcome her back again in August. Miss Moses has been looking after our food and physical comforts, and it has been no easy business with the number of visitors we have had in addition to the uninvited guests who have been turning up in increasing numbers. In this connection may we ask you all to co-operate with us in seeing that men are not sent here with the idea of their becoming ashram volunteers without their having both written to us and also got a definite invitation from us to come. We have a rule that we should not accept those who come suddenly, without previously having given us sufficient time for thought and consideration regarding them. This type of uninvited guest has become a regular problem to us of late.

But we are very glad and thankful for the many friends who have visited us here and have cheered and stimulated us by their fellowship. We would like to mention especially Mr. and Mrs. Thorp of the United Theological College, Bangalore, who conducted some devotional meetings for us in February. Also Mr. Dixon Smith and the Telugu friends who came with him in April for a week of special meetings concerning Life Changing Service, and whose meetings were a help to many of our N. M. S. fellow-workers and to some of the Christians of Tirupattur as well as to us. Then in July we had a delightful time with Dr. Hujer, a Czecho-Slovakian astronomer. It was not merely the wonderful facts about the stars that he told us of, but far more his simple friendliness and the breadth of his outlook comprising all nations and the deep religious conviction sunderlying all his philosophy of life that inspired us.

So far Paton has been giving all the news of the Ashram and so it remains for me just to say something about the village work we have been doing this year. Those of you in the Tamil Nadu who have already received the Tamil circular letter would have received the full report made by the students who come to this Ashram this summer for learning Rural Reconstruction work. But for the sake of others I shall try and give a very brief summary of the same. After a perliminary training of about 10 days or so we took the students to

our branch village ashram at Madavalam from which as centre we worked in the surrounding villages. One of the new methods we adopted for teaching the villagers sanitation was to form ourselves into a "Shock Brigade". In the mornings when we entered a village we pointed out to the villagers the illhealth caused by their house drains running everywhere and anywhere along the village lanes round about their houses. They generally would solemnly promise to rectify the same before evening but when we went again in the evening it would be "as it was in the beginning". Immediately we (who knowing village psychology needed no prophetic foreknowledge of what we would have to do) would set about with crow bars, spades and brooms and begin digging drain pits, canals and sweeping the surroundings! Villagers do not like "educated people" cleaning their gutters and get thoroughly shocked at this scene. Hence the name "Shock Brigade"! Usually the very old and the very young among the villagers soon joins us in helping in this work. But the village young men stand at a distance and smile curiously!

After some day we made Kurusilapattu another fair sized village as our centre and worked in the surrounding villages. We usually paid our respect as soon as possible after our arrival to the village dignitaries. With a few honourable exceptions most of these 'gentlemen' were self-satisfied and indifferent blaming the poor villagers for all the ills they were subject to but never rea-

lising their own share of responsibility. We especially studied rural indebtedness as far as we could gather information. I shall quote here from the report made by the students. "Of the villagers roughly 5% are in a state of indebtedness. Poverty, heavy land taxation borrowing money to buy land, drink, marriage expenses, and festivals seem to be the reasons for this year owing to lack of rains they have borrowed money to pay Governer revenue and for their food supply.....The Co-operative Bank seem to increaae rather than mitigate their misery. These banks lend out money at 93 $\frac{3}{8}$ % and when the people are unable to pay back their debt they file a suit against them and get their house and lands auctioned to recover the debt. We saw this taking place in a few villages. The Chetties (money lenders) lend money at 12%. Unless our villagers are redeemed from this crushing debt there is no possibility of rural uplift or of national progress. It is necessary for the Government to step in and, make investigation and redeem the villagers from this. National leaders must make every effort to wean the villagers from this demoralising habit of borrowing".

It was painful to note how much "Sarada's Law" re : early marriage was being ignored in practice. The last part of our stay was up in the Javadi Hills working among those poor neglected hill people known here as "Malayalees" (hill dwellers) Even the one school we saw last year at Pudur (the largest

village) is now closed. They told us that when they approached a Govt. official for re-starting the school they were advised not to bother about schools there as "education will spoil their children for agricultural work on land because the educated youngster would begin to love the shade and hate work in the sun!" The more I work among villagers the deeper is my conviction that no satisfactory progress can take place among them until there is compulsory mass education up to a standard sufficient to inculcate a taste for post-school reading. The people on the hills were very friendly to us and were most anxious that we should help in starting a school. But where are we to find the pioneers with the self-sacrifice to go and live on these malarious hills with poor water supply and amidst want and poverty? During all this village work we used our magic lantern and gramophone freely for propaganda work about sanitation and prevention of epidemic diseases. We had generally large crowds who listened very attentively to all we said to them. We also rendered first aid and treated sick people with simple remedies. Where we found real friendship and keenness we also showed magic lantern pictures of Christ and explained to them His life and work. After all we felt the greatest testimony would be our own consistent daily life amidst them. Life amidst villagers is a life continuously watched and studied by them. Villagers are quick to detect inconsistency.

We are now continuing this village work around our own Ashram area, by night schools and magic lanterns propaganda about sanitation, education and preventible epidemic diseases.

This letter would reach the many dear friends whose love and hospitality I enjoyed during my recent world tour ! How could I forget you ? In this cloudy world of strife, war, hatred and man's oppression of man, this sunshine of Love lightens and heartens our souls. Shall we ever more fervently pray that the false standards of human relationships like colour, and a materialistic "civilisation" which are seeking to destroy human fellowship might give place to the true and eternal relationship of Love.

Together we send you our loving greetings, and ask for your continued fellowship and intercession on our behalf.

Your friends,

ERNEST F. PATON,

SAVARIROYAN JESUDASON.

CHRISTU-KULA AHSHRAM,

(Tirupattur, N. A.)

Christmas 1936.

DEAR FRIENDS,

How we rejoice and give thanks for that wonderful message that Christmas brings again to us of God in His love and mercy stooping down and being born among us in the midst of all our sin and shame, all our strivings and sufferings that we might share in His love and joy and peace ! And this year more than ever we need the assurance that while fear, hatred and the lust for power are enslaving so many on every side and doing their dire work of destruction, the banners of Goodwill and Love of the Prince of Peace are still floating aloft for those who have eyes to see them, and ears to hear the angels song. We thank God for that great and growing fellowship of His people who are experiencing anew the joy of obedience to the King of Kings and the wonderful life and power which He supplies from day to-day. So we send out this message so that it may be just one more tiny link in that great chain of fellowship that binds us all together. May He grant that each one of us may stand firm as one man to challenge and to overcome, through suffering if need be, all the powers of evil.

In the beginning of the year one of us (Jesudason) spent two months in the North, attending the Western India Student's Camp at Kolhapur and then visiting a number of important centres both renewing old friendships and making new ones, and speaking everywhere especially to Christian congregations and students of the fulness of the Christian life that should be ours. Some extracts from his travel diary will be sent later on.

About the end of March, we both together had some days for quiet fellowship and then later along with Mr. D. M. Devasahayam (of Nagercoil) and our senior Ashram group (8 of us in all) we had two days of quiet for prayer and thinking and planning together. Several important matter we were able to see with a new clearness, especially these ; a clear definition of our evangelistic aim that as an Ashram seek to draw men, both Christians and Non-Christians, into vital touch with Christ, and in this matter our duty to our patients was specially borne in upon us. Then we saw also the great need for deeper fellowship especially for the senior group *i.e.*, for those who are members or who were seriously considering the possibility of Ashram as their life work, and we arranged for this group to meet more frequently both for prayer and also for together planning the work of the Ashram. At the same time we were able to see the needs of those who come to the Ashram primarily as students and to plan out for

them a course of study and work including that in hospital and villages as well as in relation to the devotional side of our life. We have also set aside the former library building to be a hostel for students of which one of us takes special charge. Our English library and reading room has meanwhile been transferred to the central room to the kitchen cottage, and we find that is more convenient and that the books too are being more made use of. We also at our meeting tried to make some distribution of the responsibilities for the different sides of our Ashram life, and Jesudason has taken over from Paton the work of the 'sevak'.

In October we also had another very helpful retreat led by Dr. D. S. Ramachandra Rao. He took as his theme "Silence" and showed us how much of the life and thought of India had been moulded by that attitude, and he also indicated some lines along which we should seek to contribute in this direction in face of the impact of the bustling activity of the West.

Most of the summer Vacation volunteers for the Village work were able to come so as to join us for Good Friday and Easter when we had Rev. E. Savariyan and Dr. Mason Olcott with us. Then during the following week we had Miss Visalakshi Ammal with her Veena teaching us new lyrics and Mr. Adinarayana Chettiar to speak to us about village reconstruction work. At the same time we had the Opening Ceremony of the Tamil Library, Reading Room and Village Indu-

stries Museum all of which are housed in the water-tank building near to the wind-mill. A large crowd of villagers came for the occasion and after Jesudason had explained the object of the gathering the chairman Mr T. Adinarayana Chettiar addressed the gathering and formally opened the Village Industries Museum and the Tamil Library. For the Village Work we had a particularly fine set of men. We started first in the villages around Madavallam using our building there as our base of operations and then went out to other centres. For those who can read Tamil a full report of the work is available so we need not go into details. As in past years we had a very friendly reception from the villagers.

This summer we made a new experiment of renting a house on the Nilgiris in a very quiet and beautiful spot near Kaity for 6 weeks where Amma (Mrs. Srinivassa), Philip, Ross, Gnananandam as well as a number of old friends like Bishop Abraham, Bishop and Mrs. Packenham Walsh, Mr. Sanjiva Rao, Mr. Chenchiah, Mr. D. M. Devasahayam and Dr. Miss Pitchaimuthu were able to share with us for longer or shorter periods in happy fellowship. We also found a number of friends there in Kaity like Dr. Simon and Mr. Smith of the St. George's homes. Altogether it was a very pleasant holiday.

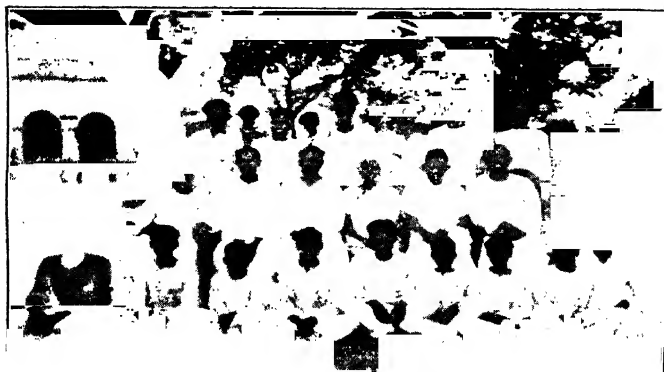
The hospital work has been going on vigorously, and our problem has been how to provide beds for

those who need them. Ross and Philip have very greatly lightened the burden of the hospital work for us both by taking over very much of the responsibility for the arrangement and the running of it. Ross on the Surgical side and Philip on the Medical side and the Open Air Ward as well as for the weekly Out Patient Leper Clinic. We have to be thankful too for the faithful and hard work that has been done by the majority of our students and volunteers in the hospital several of whom also go out to our night schools after the days work in the wards. We have no paid sweeper and the Ashram students see to the cleanliness of the hospital latrines (now fitted with water flushing) as well as to the cleaning of the wards with the help of the villagers. Of the older students Shunmughasundaram is still with us doing laboratory work. Asirvatham, Kuruvilla, Swamidas and Jeevothama have appeared for the Government Compounders Examination at Vellore and we trust that they will get through as they have all done really good work. In October we have a new addition to our qualified men in Doctor Mammen. The surgical operations performed this year included (among other more ordinary ones) those for perforated gastric ulcer, intestinal obstruction and anastomosis, several cases of severe compound fracture, mastoid disease and other bone troubles in addition to many eye operations chiefly for cataract. We are often surprised and distressed at the number

of patients that are brought to us as the result of the severe accidents that are all too common among the agricultural population. There have been several outbreaks of cholera in the surrounding villages, and recently there was an epidemic among the Mohammedan villagers of Puthagaram where we went and gave saline to a number of cases. Also this year Typhoid fever has been more than usually prevalent as well as dysentery, all of which go to show the tremendous need there is for proper protection for the water supply both of towns and villages. You will be wondering whether our new hospital building is not ready yet. The building is complete but some of the fittings, water-pipes electric lighting etc., still need fixing. As we wrote in our last year's letter this new building we hope to use for accommodating the more serious medical and surgical cases (ten beds each) and also the eye operation cases (eight beds). As you will easily understand new accommodation of this sort means that we require more properly trained helpers, especially nurses of mature years and experience. So far God has wonderfully supplied fellow-workers according to the needs of the service, will you join us in praying that God will provide for this also and show us in what way He desires that the need should be met and how our hospital work may be made both more efficient medically and better equipped to meet the spiritual needs of our patients.



Mr. C. F. Andrews and us both.



In our Day School Timothy, Alexander, Samuel, Stephen and Israel have formed the regular staff. The school has now six standards recognised by the Government and over 90 pupils on the roll. Handloom weaving continues. The bigger boys assist in this work and also have little looms of their own on which they weave tape for our hospital beds while the smaller ones do spinning. Just recently one of us took nine of the boys and two teachers for an educational excursion to Salem and Mettur. They had a very interesting and enjoyable time visiting the woolen carpet weaving factory and the Magnesite works near Salem and the great Dam at Mettur over the Cauvery river together with the Hydro-Electric Power House which is just being constructed.

We are specially grateful this year for the keenness that has been shown in the three night schools both by our volunteer teachers and by the pupils. Even the Kurumbers (shepherds) who were so slow at first to respond have built themselves with a little outside help a nice new night school where they along with some Vannier caste boys are attending with fair regularity. At Jodimangalam village the people have collected money and bought a small plot to be held in common by the village on which they are hoping soon to put up a new school as the present one is far too small ; in this school children of two different kinds of depressed class join together for study. And in the

third school about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to the North of the Ashram, Gownder-caste pupils have come and joined a school where last year there were only depressed class children attending. This hopeful intermingling (and interdining during school picnics and excursions) of different castes fills us with joy as these little children shall be the future leaders of our villages.

To encourage the pupils and parents of the night-school the teachers have arranged for a "Mahanadu" or combined meeting every month for the three night schools and the villagers. Each night school takes it in turn to be responsible for the evenings entertainment, and they have been doing very well giving some splendid little dramas with moral lessons in them, and each school vies with the others in giving the best performance. It is really wonderful how well many of these young lads who had never been to a day school have developed and are capable of giving a good account of themselves in front of their elders. Our joy is all the more because the most urgent need just now is the spread of popular ("mass") education. Two books have been published by us this year—"Life of Weerasurya" (English) and a Tamil book on Rural Reconstruction.

Our Ashram family now numbers 26 including those who are with us as students. Mrs. Shreenivassa and Miss Moses continue to be the sole occupants of our

" Amma Veedu," but we still hope that, if it be His will, more women with a real calling for Ashram life may come forward and build up this side of the work along their own lines.

We have been feeling the need for closer contact between the Ashram and the many friends who in the past have been with us here both as visitors and volunteers and who are keenly interested in carrying out in their own lives some of the ideals of the Ashram as far as they are applicable to ordinary domestic life. We hope too that they will also encourage us by regular visits as well as by their fellowship in prayer. In order to make this link more effective we are inviting a number to meet here from 31st December to 3rd January. We hope that these may form the nucleus of a wider fellowship and we would ask those of you who feel specially interested in this to write to us, and we shall let you know what transpires at our meeting and then try to keep you in closer touch with our activities here.

Paton hopes to sail for Europe from Colombo on the 10th March 1937 and will probably be away from the Ashram for about a year.

As we write this we think of so many of you in different countries and we thank God for that wonderful fellowship that He has brought us through His

Kingdom in spite of the clouds of war and blood shed that sadden humanity. Let us seek to be more faithful in praying for one another that we may realise the greatness of His calling for us. Especially we would ask you to pray for us, that our vision may be widened and that we may see more clearly what is the place and purpose that He has for this Ashram in the up-building of his Kingdom at this particular time. We specially thank all of you who have written to us letters which we fear we have often left unanswered but which yet have brought real comfort and cheer to us.

Our sincere and loving greetings to you all for a very happy Xmas and a New year of great blessing.

Your friends,

ERNEST FORRESTER PATON,

SAVARIRAYAN JESUDASON.

**Christu-kula Ashram,
Tirupattur, (N. A.)
15—2—37.**

Dear friends,

We are herewith sending you a detailed report of the Conference of the Ashram Friends. Though the tentative name given to the group is Christukula or Family of Christ, this is not final. The next Conference might perhaps suggest a different name. But a name is not everything. The rule of life tentatively suggested by this Conference should mean very much more. We hope that as you put these rules into practise you would be led into a larger vision and a fuller experience of the life in Christ. Above all let us never forget to keep up the fellowship in prayer. Prayer will increase mutual love and mutual love will make us pray the more fervently for one another. Remember also in prayer the students who come to us every Summer for village work, which this year will last from May 19th to June 20th.

In the Conference it was suggested that the next one should be held during Dasara Holidays in October this year. Have you any suggestions about this or any other time that you think would be convenient for the majority ?

With hearty greetings,

Your friends,

SAVARIRAYAN JESUDASON.

ERNEST FORRESTER PATON

CHRISTUKULA CONFERENCE

*(A Report of the Conference of the members of the
Christukula Ashram with the Friends
of the Ashram.)*

In response to the invitation of the Brothers of the Ashram, Fr. S. Jesudason and Dr. E. Forrester Paton, the "friends of the Ashram" gathered together for a season of retreat, conference and fellowship at the Ashram buildings for three days, from New year eve till the evening of Jan. 3, 1937. The company consisted of the following persons ;—

1. Bishop Packenham Walsh, Christu Sishya
Ashram, Tadagam, Coimbatore.
2. Mrs. Packenham Walsh, Do.
3. Rev. Fr. Bill Lash, Christu Prema Sanga
Ashram, Poona.
4. Prof. Mrs. Gnanadurai, Queen Mary's College,
Madras.
5. Mrs. M. Sreenivasa, Christukula Ashram.
6. Miss P. Moses, Do
7. Mr. R. D. Samuel. Arasaradi, Madura.
8. Mrs. R. D. Samuel, Do

9. Mr. S. Devanesan, Tranquebar House,
Trichinopoly.
10. Dr. J. C. Savarirayan, Scudder Memorial
Hospital, Ranipet.
11. Rev. Alexander Rathnam, American Mission,
Arni.
12. Rev. Joseph John, Agricultural Farm,
Katpadi.
13. Mr. S. Palanisami, Usilamkulam, Vahai-
kulam Post, Tinnevely.
14. Mr. T. Adinarayana Chettiar, Bar at-law,
Salem.
15. Mr. S. J. Duraisami. U.T. College, Bangalore
Cantt.
16. Prof. F.W. Kibble, Christian College, Madras
17. Mr. G. V. Job, St. Columba's High School,
Chinglepet.
18. Sadhu Mathai, Christian Institute, Alleppey.
19. Mr. D. M. Devasahayam, Woodlands Estate,
Nagercoil.
20. Dr. Ben J. Ross, Christukula Ashram.

21. Mr. Gnananandam, Christukula Ashram.
22. Mr. Alexandar Samuel, Do.
23. Mr. S. Timothy, Do.
24. Mr. C. J. Sanandham, Do.
25. Mr. Christudas
Shanmugasundaram, Do.
26. Dr. P. V. Philip, Do.
27. Mr. Rajarathnam
Savarirayan, Do.
28. Dr. E. Forrester-Paton, Do.
29. Dr. S. Jesudason. Do.
30. Vedamuthu Mathuram, 9, Hospital Road,
Vellore.

Letters of apology for absence were received from the following :—

1. Rt. Rev. Abraham Mar Thoma, Suffragan
Metropolitan, Tiruvella.
2. Justice P. Chenchiah, Chief Judge, Pudukottah.
3. Visalakshi Ammal, Gopalepuram, Cathedral
Post, Madras.

4. Mr. R. C. Samuel, Y.M.C A., Coimbatore.
5. Fr. Verrier Elwin, Ashram of St. Francis, Karanjia.
6. Miss K. Sircar, N.M.S., Bethlehem, Montgomery Dist. Punjab.
7. Mr. S. S. Savarimuthu, Fabricius High School, Purasawakam, Madras.
8. Dr. D. D. Dasen, Laymen's Evangelical Fellowship Kilpauk, Madras
9. Dr. Issac David, Union Mission Sanatorium, Arogyavaram, Madanapalle.
10. Dr. Mason Olcott, Virthumpet, Katpadi.
11. Mrs. L. D Honeggar, the Ashram, Vellore.
12. Miss Joy Solomon, Vidivelli Ashram, Sayumalai (Via) Koilpatti, Tinnevelly Dt.
13. Prof. J. D. Asirvatham, Christian College, Madras.
14. Dr. Miss Margaret Gibbons, American Mission Hospital, Madanapalle.
15. Prof. and Mrs. J. P. Manickam, Christian College, Madras.
16. Mr. Thomas David, N. M. S., Royapettah, Madras.

17. Mr. P. O. Philip, National Christian Council,
Nelson Square, Nagpur.
18. Rev. R. R. Keithahn, Devakotai.
19. Rev. M. Sanjeeva Rao, Basel Mission,
Mangalore.
20. Rev. John Verghese, Christudasa Ashram,
Coyalmannar, Palghat.
21. Dr. D. S. Ramachandra Rao, Baghya Vilas,
Bezwada.
22. Dr. E. S. Chellappa, K. E. M. Hospital,
Secundrabad.
23. Dr. Miss Pichamuthu, No. 1, Panthadi Street,
Madura.
24. Mrs. E. S. Appasamy, Ritherdon Road,
Vepery, Madras.
25. Mr. J. S. Lewis, Postal Audit Department,
Calcutta.

Object.

The conference began at 7-45 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 31, 1936, when Dr. S. Jesudason and Dr. E. Forrester Paton welcomed the delegates and made a statement of the object of the special gathering.

Dr. Paton spoke as follows :—

“ We are met together as friends who have been drawn to one another by our common quest of a way of life that shall be more in accord with the mind of Christ. Our thoughts have been centering around the ancient Indian ideal of ashram life and we have been trying each in our own way to see in what ways that life can be practised today. So we meet to exchange our thoughts and experiences and to see whether some more definite bond, through a common way of life, may not be helpful for us each individually and for the great glory of God.

We seek during these days to see more clearly in what way Christ would take this Ashram ideal and transform it that it may be an instrument in the building up of His Kingdom. Christian ashrams must be places of spiritual experiment along these lines, but we need also that fellowship and help of friends who can work out the ideals in the more ordinary avocations and especially in the home life. We can do much by supporting one another in prayer, and by occasional interchange of letters. The friends will be helping us, not only by their counsel but also by being themselves propagating centres for this way of life and in the finding and selection of suitable men and women candidates for the Ashram. By visiting the Ashram and spending some little time with us

whenever possible both they and we will be benefitted and encouraged as we strive together to be true to the high calling in Christ Jesus.

Along these and similar lines we trust that our meetings and fellowship together here will be fruitful so that we may see more clearly the vision that God has for each one of us in His strength may be faithful to it.

Dr. Jesudason spoke as follows :—

“ When the Ashram was first founded our co-workers and members of the Ashram family were either young people without much experience in life or those who stayed as volunteers with us only for short periods. Naturally, Forrester Paton and I (Jesudason) were practically the only two entirely responsible for making all the decisions concerning our life and service in the Ashram, whether it be in matters small or great. It was not difficult when both of us could see clearly the issue before us and we were in no doubt as to the steps to be taken at any particular juncture or in deciding the problems that faced us at a time. But there were some times when we could not see clearly the steps to be taken or perhaps did not both feel the same way about some matter, especially where the particular matter in question affected our relationship with some outside person or organisation. So we both decided that we shall call together at certain

periods (say about once a year), some select outside friends who by their personal love for us and the Ashram family and also by the amount of personal interest in the work of the Ashram for counsel and advice in all the matters above referred to. Their function was purely advisory and what they suggested was not to be binding on the two of us, the permanent members of the Ashram. The friends so selected were in the beginning the Rt. Rev. Bishop Abraham Mar Thoma, Rev. Dr. L. P. Larsen, Mr. P. Chenchiah (now Chief Justice, Pudukottah). The first meeting of this advisory council was held at Bargur in August 15th, and 16th of the year 1925. We discussed such matters as our relationship with the Christian Residential High School (then in existence near the Ashram), the N.M.S., the right use of money (especially dealing with the question of endowment) etc. At this time we also reaffirmed our faith in voluntary principle in the selection of workers for the Ashram. Since August 1925 we had several such meetings with these friends at the following places and dates (2) At the Christukula Ashram, when Miss A. K. Sircar was also present by special invitation ; Sept. 1st and 2nd, 1928. (3) At Madura, Sept. 7th and 8th, 1929 at Rev. Dr. L. P. Larsen's house (4) At Courtallam (Via Tenkasi), Aug. 26th and 27th, 1930. (5) At Bangalore at Dr. Larsen's house, Oct. 24th and 25th, 1931 and (6) the last one was held at Kaity (Nilgiri Hills) during the first week of June this year,

when Mrs. Sreenivasa and Mr. D. M. Devasahayam also were present.

During the last five or six years we have had with us as co-workers in the Ashram family senior workers like Mrs. Sreenivasa, Dr. B. J. Ross, Dr. P. V. Philip and Bro. Gnananandan, and so we have had a great deal of help and advice within the Ashram itself, as we two and the above four have been meeting regularly once a week to discuss and share together some of the daily problems raised by our work here.

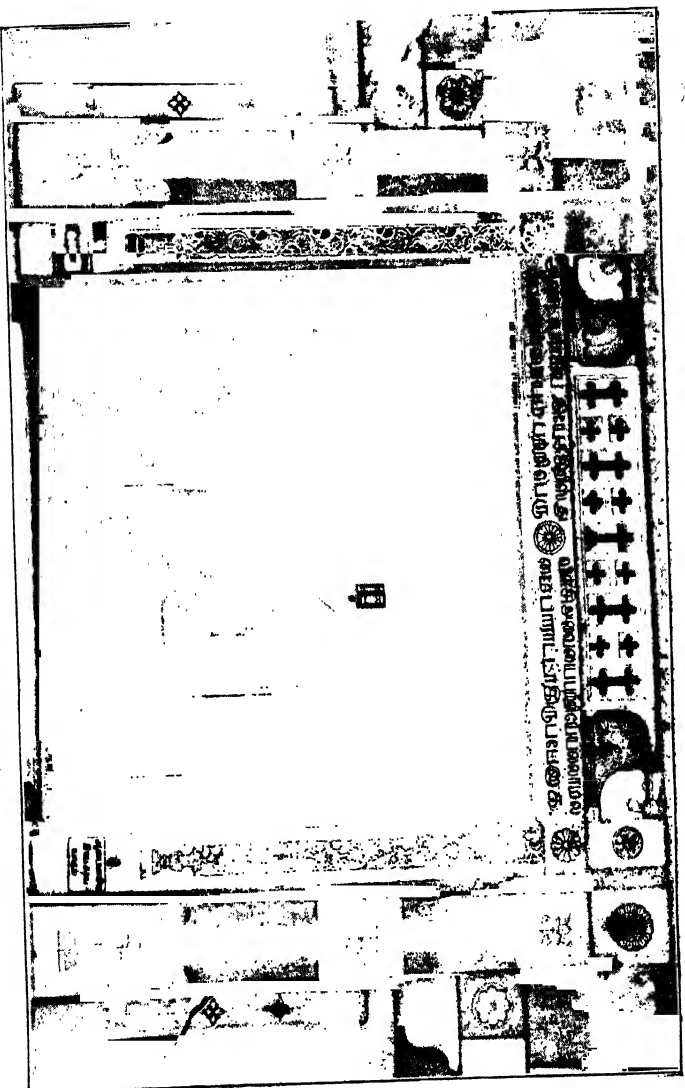
The present conference of a wider circle of friends has been called with a view to take steps to cement the spiritual link between the Ashram and the friends who in the past have come in increasing numbers into personal contact with us and to make it living and fruitful in a twofold manner, and to take concrete steps make this spiritual kinship a working factor.

First the Ashram must become a potent influence in the life and work of its Friends. The Ashram should be a centre for spiritual research. The actual working members should be like (to use a modern scientific expression) research workers in a spiritual laboratory. Necessarily research workers put themselves under methods of life and work not of usual "normal" type. But once a truth is discovered at an ashram it is really the property of society in general, members of which have to apply it in life and practice. In this conference

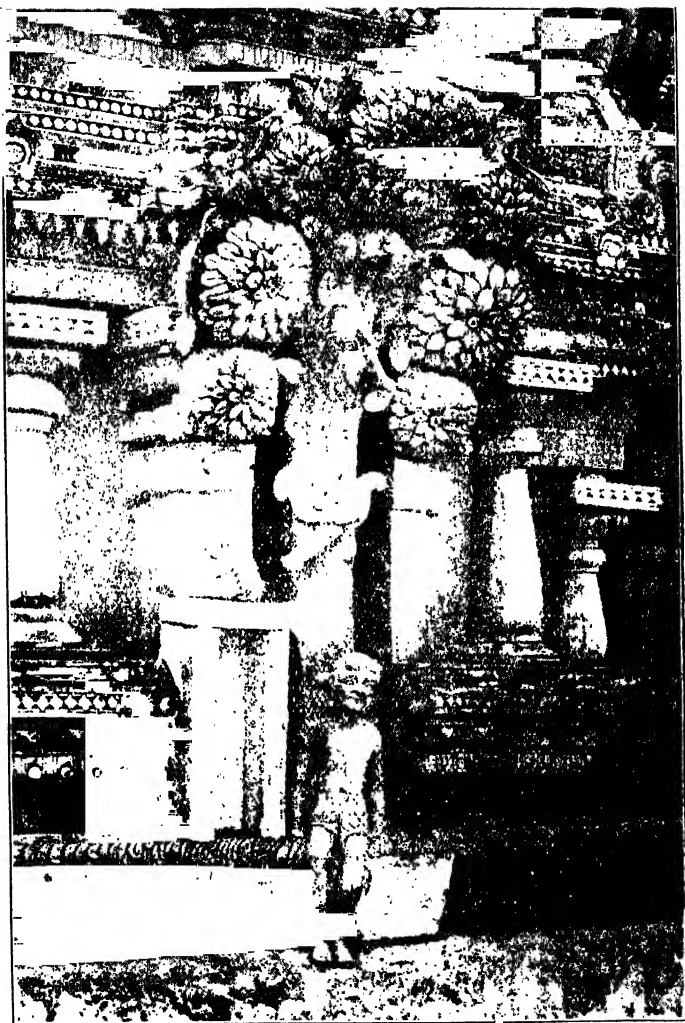
we have to pray and talk together and find out such Ashram ideals as can be applied in practice by men in ordinary so-called secular walks of life and work or in their own homes. It is usual for people to brush aside such ideals as practicable only for men and women who have taken some extraordinary step in life by certain renunciations of the normal privileges and pleasures of human life. If the great spiritual truths of ashrams were meant only for certain select few extraordinary type of people, then they have no meaning for normal life in this world. But if such a thing as a regulated life of spiritual discipline, prayer and devotion to God, stewardship of possessions (of whatsoever form), purity and self-control, fellowship etc. are really truths that are applicable to all, then these things must be made to permeate society. The only way to do this is through the life of those Friends who have come into contact with the Ashram and who are bound by ties of love to its members and are earnestly anxious to apply Ashram ideals in their own life outside in their own home life and in spheres of work. This conference is meant to enable such Friends to make a solemn dedication of their lives and a resolution to carry our practicable ideals in life, being linked in fellowship with the Christukula Ashram. Necessariliy in the beginning the number of such will be limited as personal touch and frequent contacts ~~by~~ visits to the Ashram or through correspondence ~~will~~ have to be kept up.

Secondly, we pray and trust that this fellowship with the Ashram friends will grow to such an active living state that this Ashram and its members will also become the centre of constant and affectionate thoughtfulness and care, and also the object for intercession on the part of these Friends of the Ashram. These Friends will take an active interest in the work going on at the centre, bring such as can be members of the Ashram or volunteers into touch with the Ashram or act as advisers re: applications from volunteers in their areas. They will visit the Ashram whenever possible and encourage and cheer the Ashram Family. We trust that these will become a vital factor in the future development and usefulness of the Ashram. This wider fellowship between the members of the Christukula Ashram and their outside Friends or associates will also be of great help in taking away any temptation to feelings of spiritual loneliness of the group actively engaged in service at the Ashram as if though they were separated off from normal society in general. Thus it might be the "Greater Ashram" would come into existence."

After the introductory statement, Bishop Packenham Walsh of Christu Sishya Ashram, Tadagam, Coimbatore Dist., gave a devotional address suitable to the occasion. On New Year morning the Bishop conducted the service at the Jabalayam and spoke impressively



Moolasthanam (Sanctuary) of our Jebalayam.



The Burden-bearer carved on the Gopuram
(Tower) of the Jebalayam.

on the twenty-third Psalm. All the devotional meetings every evening and morning during the Retreat were conducted by the Bishop. At the Sunday morning service, Bishop Walsh, assisted by the Fr. Bill Lash of the Poona Ashram, conducted the communion service and administered communion.

The Ashram as a place of development, growth and training in the Life in Christ

On the New Year Day (Friday) at 9 a.m. Rev. Fr. Bill Lash of Poona spoke on the above subject

“The life in Christ was not given to the disciples till the day of Pentecost. But right from the time of His Galilean Ministry, our Lord was sharing His life with them and training them to receive it. His method of training was threefold: to exhibit what was to be learned by means of *His example*, to give them specific *instruction* about the same, and to send them to *practice* or give expression to it. His training covered the whole of human personality, mind, body and soul. With regard to the *mind*, two things may be noted—the knowledge of the Bible and of the mind of the people. It is important for Ashram people to be soaked in the knowledge of the *Bible*. To be Bible-minded is the best cure for worldly mindedness. The Sermon on the Mount illustrated His method of Bible study. Unlike the Scribes He had trained Himself to ponder on passage of Scripture till He found their inner meaning,

as is seen from the way in which He deals with the Ten Commandments. On the other hand, the Parables of our Lord show how He had studied to enter into the thought-life of the people and understand their mind and the matters that interested them. Hence the second requisite for a member of the Ashram is to be trained in subjects like comparative religion, which helps them to understand those about them. As regards the *body*, our Lord was trained in the useful art of carpentry, as indeed every Jew was in some trade. He did not discourage His disciples from continuing their work of fishing. St. Paul learned as he was, persisted in his tent-making. For a member of the ashram, *manual labour* ought to form an important element in his training. It helps to humble intellectual pride and attune his mental outlook with that of the labourers who constitute the majority of mankind. And just as works of mercy through healing formed part of our Lord's ministry, Ashram members need training in the relief of sickness. With regard to the training of the *soul*, our Lord deferred it till the disciples had first realised by observing Him that His powers of teaching and healing were recruited in prayer : and then, when they asked the Lord "to teach us to pray", He gave them instructions in the most important part of all ashram training. Members must be trained in corporate worship and prayer as also in private prayer and in that art of mental prayer and meditation for the study of

which we have the experience of masters as for any other science or art.

After giving instruction in the training of mind, body and soul, our Lord sent the Apostles, and later the seventy, for *practice* on missions of service. The importance of letting new members wait before assuming responsible work is apt to be overlooked. It is wholesome for a man coming from the active world without Ashram life to go to school again like a child to learn that nothing could sustain him but the power of God within him, if so be that he has hitherto been upheld by his daily routine of active work. It is necessary to be so grafted in the vine that the fruit comes of itself and not to produce a show of fruits by our own efforts. The Lord led so full a life that he often had not leisure to eat or sleep, but at the same time had longing for solitude with God. In great souls there often comes a time when they both long to be alone with God and yearn over the souls of men. This tension gives poise and boldness to the soul. (CP. St. Paul in Philipians 1 : 21-26) If this poise should be found in the trained Ashram member he must learn to love solitude and silence.

It may be pointed out here that *character* is the kernel of the whole matter. This is best learnt, neither by instructions nor method, but by practising the art of living together. The family is a great school in this

art : it consists of members you did not choose but they know you as you are. It will not do in an ashram to choose members naturally agreeable to us, but we have to learn to love every one. The Apostles did not learn this in Galilee nor even by the time of the last supper in Jerusalem when they were still contending as to who would be the greatest. It needed the catastrophe of the Cross to annihilate self and prepare them for the reception of the spirit and the life in Christ on the day of Pentecost, when they came to realize the secret of being of one heart and one mind. So it is necessary for us to crucify all self and develop the life in Christ into the fellowship of love."

After Rev. Father Bill Lash of Poona had finished Dr. Jesudason spoke a few words.

"What is the primary duty of an ashram? From an experience of ashram life and work during more than fifteen years, I have come to believe that our primary duty is to deepen the spiritual life of Christians. One of the greatest obstacles to advancement of the Kingdom of God (if it be indeed not *the* greatest obstacle is the un-Christian life of so many professing Christians.) In December 1920 when we were travelling through out India before deciding on a suitable place to establish this Ashram, we had a talk with a very saintly missionary who had been work-

ing in India for nearly forty years. He advised us not to establish our Ashram anywhere near the proximity of an established long standing Christian church as the members of these would prove a "thorn in the flesh" for us and that it would be best if we chose a place which was a "clean slate". He also told us that our primary duty was to deepen the spiritual life of professing Christians and that our "missionary" work should be indirect. During the last fifteen years I have felt more and more that we had a great work to do in deepening the spiritual life of the young men who had come to us as volunteers for short and longer periods, and then go out into life and work into the different parts of this part of India. Even while they are here the effect of their Christ like example in life and service is far more telling upon the non-Christians than any amount of mere "preaching". If the "dynamo" of Christian life and power be in them it is sure to manifest itself in efficient and attracting witness for Christ as the life in Christ could never be hid. But if it be not there mere preaching would be in vain. Therefore the training of Christian young men in the life in Christ is all important in an ashram."

In the discussion that followed several friends took part and various points received elucidation and emphasis. It was pointed out that many were anxious to engage in some activity for activities sake,

even for praise of men instead of trying to have God express himself through our activity that such activity was futile and even tended to self-deception and that it was essential to act according to the purpose and under the guidance of God. Attention was drawn to the problem of combining prayer and work. The Ashram was a place where people came primarily for fellowship and work should be apportioned according to individual gifts so as to make the best use of them. Institutions should not be allowed to crowd out life. The deepest contact was spiritual and an expression of the love of God in our hearts. It was remarked that in Hinduism there was a seeking after individual salvation, but on the other hand it was shown that this tendency was discernible in the preparatory stages and that service through spiritual contact came as a matter of course after spiritual attainment. Identification of the worker with the people was another matter that was emphasised. The method of doling out help created a false spirit and possessions of property was often a hinderance. Manual work established a contact with the masses, but should not be undertaken to attract attention. Identification should come about in a natural way even as the salt soaked and the light spread. But manual work was good for the educated man for his own discipline, and half an hour a day of manual labour might serve a useful purpose for all. Some attention must be devoted to the matter of discipline in the Ashram. Discipline was very

important, but without the personal touch it possessed little value.

**The Ashram as a place of realization
of the presence of God.**

On Saturday January 2, at 9-30 A. M. Mr. D. M. Devasahayam spoke on the subject.

“ There is no royal road for the realization of the presence of God. We are all directly under the control and guidance of God, and the Holy Spirit was the one great Guru for all. Perhaps the one great method of Spiritual discipline and training consisted in the experiences of the ordinary life in this world with its problems, trials and anxieties, amidst which we have to find the all sufficiency of God and secure the peace that comes from Him. The other great method was the renunciation of worldly life with its comforts and entanglements adopted by the Sannyasi who cultivates the companionship of God by getting alone with Him in lonely places and even whilst wandering about in the world. The Ashram discipleship and training may be said to be specially designed for the beginner, while it does serve as a meeting place of saints of different types and stages and provides conveniences for occasional refreshing for all. In judging of the work of an ashram it is well to remember these limitations and not expect too much or be unduly discouraged. .

While labouring under certain inevitable limitations an ashram must set itself to the task of individual, collective and institutional realization of God. *For individual realization*, certain facilities must be provided. Every member must possess his own private room for personal devotion where he could be perfectly free with himself and God, and be alone with Him. He should have set time for devotion two or three times a day, but also have at his disposal free times occasionally of much longer duration. He should have an accessible library containing stimulating biographies of Saints and Servants of Humanity. Each Ashram should have atleast one experienced, spiritually advanced member, who has attained spirituality of a high order, as an ashram was indeed primarily the residence of a Guru. An ashram may not be regarded as complete without provision for secular and manual labour to prevent laziness, to give physical exercise and even a useful and remunerative handicraft, to relieve spiritual tension and afford recreation to mind and body. The hospital work at Tiruppatur may be said to provide this in an eminent degree. Every Ashram must take account of body and soul, work and devotion.

While an ashram is a place for spiritual culture for the individuals, a Christian Ashram ought to consider itself particularly as an institution for the *collective*

realization of the presence of God. The emphasis on the life of fellowship of believers is characteristic of Christ's teaching and of Christianity. It lies at the basis of the conception of the Church and was a principle enshrined in monastic brotherhood. It is the soul of the various group movements that renovate the Christian Church at different times in the course of its long history. Matthew 18 : 18-20 contains a statement and exposition of this principle. A group of true believers is a guarantee of the divine presence and the manifestation of the divine presence in the Group is the acid test of sincerity of its members. In regard to matters placed in prayer before God, the symphony (the Greek Word for 'agree' in v. 19 is 'symphonise') in the hearts of the believers constituting the Group concerning these matters ensured their answer, as it really indicated the divine will. This fellowship or natural love is referred to by our Lord as the mark of discipleship (John 13:35) by which they are to be distinguished by others and this unity of spirit of the disciples is the means by which the world should come to believe in their Lord and His Divine Mission.

Granted sincerity and consecration, collective worship is not only an easier method of God realization, but produces greater results. The spiritual energy that emanates from a group in fellowship is far greater

than the sum of spiritual power of the individuals composing it. This collective realization or spiritual unity characterised the Early Church was the secret of its success. Salvation means the transcendence of self and fellowship is a method of achieving and, ensuring it. Christianity does lay emphasise on the need of human gurus as Hinduism does but recognised in the Holy Spirit a sufficient teacher for all, and He is specially available in the life of Christian fellowship.

An ashram also should aim at the *realization of God as an institution*. It should aim at a manifestation of the spirit of fellowship and of spirit filled service. It would be well to release the members of the Ashram in turns one after another for engaging in prayer, meditation and devotional study and keep up a round of real devotion throughout the day, for the benefit of the individual as well of the institution as an instrument of service. It would also greatly add to the value of an ashram if a person who had attained a real measure of spiritual status is available at stated times for religious conversation and advice for visitors.

Finally it would be well to bear in mind all the time the goal and significance of *God-realization*, which may be consist in the achievement of spiritual tranquility, or the peace that passeth all understanding

or a life of victory over sin and self, as an abiding possession. What is known as *Mukthi* in Hinduism is taught in Christianity as *Holiness* or Christian perfection and is referred to as the *Sabbath rest* of the Christian in Epistle to the Hebrews. It is the duty of the Christian Ashrams to keep the flag of Christian spiritual attainment high aloft in the midst of a Christian church which is content with low standards." .

In the discussion that followed, emphasis was laid on silence and collective silent waiting upon God, and the meeting closed with a period of silent waiting.

The Ashram as a place of the Practical Demonstration of the Love of Christ.

On Saturday January 3 at 9 A.M. Sadhu K. I. Mathai, of the Christian Institute, Alleppy, spoke on the above subject.

"While the subject dealt on the previous days related to the cultivation of the inner spiritual life in the Ashram, we have to concern ourselves now with the fruits of the spirit. But we have to guard against any straining after fruits, for if the roots are sound, fruits would inevitably follow. It was pointed out yesterday that the Ashram was a place for the collective realization of the presence of God, and one has to remember that such collective realization and its power to hold His disciples into one Family with an oneness

and unity that transcends all barriers of race and colour, creed and denomination, culture and education, position and wealth, constitute *the most effective witness to the Love of Christ*. "By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13 : 35). But such intimate fellowship is costly, and we have to pay the full price for it and we may well consider the difficulties we experience in the pursuit of the same.

Lack of time is a defect in the Ashram. An Ashram more than any other institution should provide leisure and train men in the use of it. Friendship with God or man is impossible without leisure to relax yourself in company of God or man : Co-operation in the feverish round of duties need not and could not of itself draw us together and hold us in Christian Fellowship. Colleagues must love one another in common work and service. The laws of friendship have to be studied and respected, for friendship is an art to be cultivated (President E. L. King's *Laws of Friendship* may be recommended for personal study in this Connection).

Lack of natural frankness and confidence is another defect that must be remedied. Readiness to share spiritual experience of failure and success as well as to confide problems of life and work (except perhaps those of a purely professional or technical

nature) is essential for growth in friendship and group life. Inferiority and superiority complexes have to be cautiously guarded against. The experience of Oxford Group is helpful in understanding this matter. "I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known to You" (John 15: 15). Even shyness in revealing and welcoming the knowledge of one another's temporal needs comes in the way of intimate fellowship. Temporal as well as spiritual problems have to be faced and solved in prayer and thought together.

Turning from the important witness to the Love of Christ through intimate Group Life to wider service we must recognize that an ashram, as distinguished from other institutions must lay emphasis on *Quality* rather than quantity. It is also important to realize that intimate thinking, study and contemplation constitutes as much an essential service as those on the social and physical planes. In this matter we might well take a leaf out of the Hindu Ashrams, which maintain an atmosphere of peace and silence. We should strive after the development of an integrated personality and the greatest service to others arises from the possession of this spiritual wealth before which mere acts of service are secondary. Active silence constitutes the highest form of service, thought waves are supremely effective in their beneficial influence. In the presence of an integrated personality we are lifted to his level without

a word, without argument, exhortation, or admonition. Service of this superconscious or subconscious plane must be cultivated by Christian Ashrams.

A service of high order was to share with others their cares and anxieties. But it needed an integrated personality to call forth a confession of the same from men. Like Oscar Wilde (*De Profundis*) members of all Ashrams may well learn to long for the hospitality of others' anxieties and fears, as ordinary persons are not able to command the leisure for this great office of Love, and Ashram members may well be expected to render this high service. But capacity for this office only leisure with God can impart. "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." "He that abideth in me, and I in Him, the same beareth much fruit." And unless we give God to others through our personality, we shall not have served our brothers who could not live by bread alone."

In the observation that followed, the relationship that ought to exist between the younger and the older members in an ashram engaged attention. The younger ought to have the humility to understand that they are not equally qualified with the elders, whereas the elders, like parents in a good family, ought to allow the younger ones to share intelligent interest in the affairs of the Ashram family. Meticulous separation means lack of faith. Members should be carefully chosen and there-

after be fully trusted. This must appear to be democracy, whereas in Hindu Ashrams autocracy might be considered to prevail. But it should not be understood as a question of the alternative between democracy and autocracy, but as a problem of knowing God's will and seeking His guidance, through a spiritually qualified, head, or through spiritual fellowship. In so far as Christianity does not emphasise the human Guru, the success of Christian Ashrams consists in the practice of fellowship, and discovering the sympathy of hearts of the believers in a fellowship, as a practical method in finding God's will in its affairs.

Ashram Ideals in ordinary life.

On Friday afternoon at 4 P.M. Mr. G. V. Job of Chingleput spoke on "What are the Ashram Ideals that the friends of the Ashram can carry out in their own home life, and in their ordinary avocations?"

In Hinduism, Grahasta or family life also is regarded as an Ashram, with its social and religious, as well as family obligations and as forming an essential step towards a life of renunciation. But this Ashram is a Sanyasa Ashram. To translate its ideals of unselfishness and service in terms of family life we shall have to seek suggestions in the third Franciscan Order.

Attracted by the simplicity, heroism and joy of St. Francis's ascetics, many married men and women

approached him, begging him to show how they could follow the ideals of simplicity and service in their station in life. And Francis took five out of the eight rules of his ascetic orders and modified them to suit those who could not remove family ties or property. There were some among these ardent admirers of the Franciscan ideal who could not legally renounce the property which they had inherited. Francis did not desire that any of them should run away from their family obligations. He felt that family life which was the normal destiny of the majority of men and women could be suffused with the Franciscan Spirit and be made to serve effectively to promote the cause for which his ascetic orders stood. Purity, unselfishness, good-will, humility and simplicity were the ideals which these orders strove to attain.

The first rule of the order was one that related to property. Neither individual members nor the orders collectively should own property of any kind. This rule was modified for the third order in the following manner. All property should be regarded as *trust*. The owner was entitled to nothing more than what was essential for the health and ordinary comfort of himself and his dependents. The rest belonged to the poor. At the end of each year a member of the third order should calculate his income and expenditure and devote the whole of the surplus to acts of mercy.

Usually such surpluses were handed to the ascetic orders to be used in the service of the poor.

In order to make this surplus as large as possible, the members of the third order were called upon to simplify their life and reduce personal expenditure to the barest minimum. *Plain living* therefore became their second rule. They should wear only simple inexpensive clothes and deny themselves all luxuries such as theatres.

One fruitful source of friction and ill-will among men was the contempt with which the rich treated the labouring classes. In order to purge their souls of this unbrotherly feeling and to identify themselves with the poor, the members of the third order had to do regularly some kind of *manual labour*. The Franciscan Sannyasis were to regard it a privilege to consort with the sick and the lepers and the duty of *visiting and caring for the sick* was enjoined on the third order. The ascetic could not resist evil with evil and the third order *should not drag any one to court* and seek redress for their grievances even through the agency of the established law of the land. This ruled out completely personal retaliation. It so happened that the third order was recognized as a religious body and its members were granted a unique privilege from the state. The state could not compel them to render military service. And the Spirit of Francis which so prevailed among the members of the Third Order made them all

virtual *pacifists*. They exerted a powerful influence in the cause of inter-national good will.

Does the rule of the third order indicate the direction in which a hopeful Christian solution of problems of this age and generation may be found? In regard to the personal happiness one can see that this rule will redeem us from the complexity and artificiality of modern life and from our craze for excitement and thrills. The feverish restlessness which deprive men of their relish for the simple joy of existence, is the greatest enemy of inward peace and contentment. If those who are blessed with good things of the world regard them all as a sacred trust and by simplifying their lives, release a good portion of them for the relief of the poor, we should witness the dawn of a new day in our economic position. Capitalism would cease to be an evil. The anomaly of want, hungry and grinding poverty parading side by side on the high-ways of life would disappear. And that dread offspring of this economic anomaly, namely, *war* would lose its main-spring. And a wide-spread third order would govern the destinies of nations, which at present appear to be in the hands of munition makers, egotistic dictators, spineless politicians, and misguided mobs.

The third order then is not a dream. It is a vision. It is a beacon, to follow which, courage and self-

sacrifice of the highest order and a consuming zeal, not for any of the Kingdoms of this World, but for the Kingdom of the one God and His Christ, are required,

Discussion followed as to the ideals that the friends of the Ashram could adopt in their lives. Fr. Lash of Poona gave out the principles of the third order connected with his Ashram. Reference was made to a similar order started by Fr. Chakravarti in Calcutta and the third order movements in western countries. After discussion a committee was appointed to draft a Rule of Life suitable for the friends of this Christukula Ashram.

Formation of the Christu Kul. (Family of Christ).

On Saturday January 2, 1937 at 4 P.M. the committee placed the draft of a Rule of Life before the conference, and after discussions and slight alterations was adopted as a *tentative* Rule of Life, which may afterwards be modified in the light of experience and further thought.

It was also suggested that a quarterly bulletin should be conducted, that personal contact with the Ashram should be maintained by correspondence, and that an annual retreat should be arranged. In order to facilitate this work and to co-operate with the Sevak in this matter, Mr. D. M. Devasahayam was elected as Secretary.

The conference came to an end on Sunday afternoon when Bishop Pakenham Walsh offered the closing prayer for God's blessing on the conference.

A tentative rule of life for Christu Kul.

Desiring to worship God in purity of life, to love men through simplicity and unselfishness, and to be in fellowship with the Christukul Ashram we, its friends, resolve to include the following as our Rule of life.

(a) Devotional life.—

1. We shall devote a certain period every day to private prayer which shall include Bible Reading, meditation and silent waiting on God, self examination, intercession, and thanks giving.

2. We shall recollect God's presence at all times, and especially before meals and before starting any undertaking.

3. We shall set apart time for Bible and devotional study.

4. We shall also arrange where possible for conducting family worship daily in our homes.

(b) Simplicity of life —

Regarding ourselves as possessing nothing except as stewards of God's gifts, and remembering

the great poverty of so many of our fellows we resolve to simplify our mode of living in regard to food, clothing and recreation to the extent which is compatible with health and efficiency of mind and body; and to this end we shall after prayer for the guidance of God's Holy Spirit revise our monthly expenditure in order to release as much as is not essential to the well being of ourselves and our dependents for the service of the poor, and for the purposes of the Kingdom of God.

. (c) *Brotherhood*.—

Remembering that we are all children of God the one Father and Creator and remembering the unhappy divisions that exist among men, we undertake to eradicate from our hearts by the grace of Christ, all feelings of contempt, pride and hate, due to difference of race, creed, position or any other cause, and to promote actively, by word and deed, peace and brotherhood in home, Church and society at large and to support organisations which are working for peace and reconciliation between classes and nations.

. (d) *Service*.—

We undertake to promote the ideals of the Christukula Ashram in ways suggested to us by the Sevak and to show the spirit of Christukul (family of Christ) in our lives by actual service for God and His children.

Subjects suggested for Intercession.

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- (1) For deeper understanding of one another and a closer fellowship in the Spirit especially for those who have been longest in the Ashram.
- (2) That we may grow in our prayer life and in the practice of the presence of God and in showing forth the love of Christ in daily life.
- (3) That God may send us an experienced and consecrated senior nursing sister and also two or three nurses to form a sisterhood with her in the care of the sick.
- (4) That God may give us a trained head-master who can give his life for the Ashram school.
- (5) For guidance and help for Ross as he leaves the Ashram to take up some temporary work and to seek a reconciliation with his father.
- (6) For Philip that his future may be made clear to him.
- (7) For Sanantham, Timothy, and Kuruvilla as they leave the Ashram to take up work elsewhere.
- (8) For Paton as he sails for Britain on the 10th March, that his time there may be of real

blessing for him and of service for those to whom he goes.

- (9) For Jesudason that at this time of great changes he may receive all the guidance and strength and help needed so that God's name may be glorified through the Ashram.
 - (10) For the friends of the Ashram specially that the recent conference of the Ashram friends may, if it be the will of God, develop into a real larger Christukul or family of Christ fulfilling the vision of the founders.
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CHRISTU-KULA ASHRAM,

Tirupattur,

North Arcot District.

7th October, 1937.

DEAR FRIENDS,

I am sending you all herewith an English translation of the original Tamil report of the investigation done by the students who came to this Ashram last summer in connection with our Summer School of Rural Reconstruction. Along with it there is also a translation of the report of the investigation done by the students who came to a similar School in 1933 for

the sake of comparison. The students themselves are responsible for both the reports and (two of those who came this last time), also for the English translation. One or two friends and I tried to "touch up the English" here and there but it was no easy task and we have left most of the translation stand according to the style and expression of the youthful translators! We had a very nice set of earnest and keen young students this time, and it was a joy to be in their company and to share with them this study of village conditions and share in their service for their most needy brothers and sisters of the villages. May God move the hearts of many of our young people to devote their lives unselfishly for the uplift of the villages! The Congress Ministry has come and the Chief Minister has already declared that the ambition of the New Ministry is to make the "villages smile". May God give them grace to carry out their hearts' desire and longing for the uplift of our villages and to lead these millions to their God-appointed heritage! I am particularly anxious that the mother tongue should come to its rightful place as the compulsory medium of instruction in all higher education both literary and vocational. Foreign languages should be taught only after the children are well grounded in their mother tongue.

As you all know "Chinannan" (Dr. Paton) is now in Scotland for some rest and change (though he is

very active there with speaking or attending conferences especially of the Oxford Group, of which he is an ardent enthusiast). He hopes to take a revision course in Medicine and Eye Work at Edinburgh this autumn, and return to the Ashram sometime about the beginning of the New Year (1938). I am hoping to arrange for the annual meeting of the members of the Christukula Friends Group soon after the return of Paton in the New year. Ashram Friends will please let me know sufficiently early the dates convenient for them. In parts of April and May this year I had to go South to address some missionary conferences.

Our Ashram family numbers 24 (including Chinannan). The hospital continues to be full and we have had several operations including a case of retrocaecal Appendix and Sarcoma of the iliac bone and several cases of hernia etc. There was one case of a young fellow who was brought to us with the history of having been treated by a quack by the leaves of a wild plant which had caused obstinate vomiting. He died a few days later. I sent the leaves to the Govt. Chemical Examiner, Madras for investigation but he declined to examine them unless my request went to him through the Police Department!

We have not started work in the new block of buildings yet, though often tempted to do so by the pressure of the present wards being overcrowded. We

urgently need more qualified medical help to do this. But as Dr. Mammen has promised to stay longer and as a new volunteer Dr. Thomas has come, I hope to begin the work in the new block as soon as possible. Our Ashram School has been recognised as a Higher Elementary School up to the seventh standard. Kandasamy was the only trained teacher till now, though we had several untrained ones. Joseph Rajanayagam an Intermediate trained teacher with practical experience at the London Mission High School at Coimbatore since 1933, has now joined us and is now the Headmaster of the school. We are very thankful to God for this. This is an answer to prayer. We pray that God may send us another (*at least secondary*) trained teacher soon, as the Government insists upon this for permanent recognition. The three night school are also going on as usual in three villages. So please definitely pray that God may send us *trained* helpers both for the hospital and school. It is wonderful how He has met our rapidly increasing needs wonderfully during the last 16 years! He has been greatly encouraging our faith in spite of all our unworthiness. Voluntary unpaid service is very urgently needed in our rural areas afflicted by poverty, ignorance and epidemics. There is an urgent need for trained workers especially young doctors and teachers willing to serve the villagers unselfishly, and satisfied if provided with (as at this Ashram), just such simple

daily needs as food, clothing etc. Unfortunately those older folks who appeal to the young not to seek for jobs and salaries are themselves well provided for in this respect, and so their appeal falls flat on the young ! Self sacrifice on the part of parents and leaders is very essential to inspire the young people to respond to the call of the villagers. God grant us all the needed vision, purity and self surrender.

Rev. E. Savarirayan of Vellore conducted Holy Communion service at the Ashram Jebalaya last Sunday morning (October 3rd). After the Communion, Rajaratnam Savarirayan, Swamidoss, and Rajanayagam dedicated themselves with the intention of devoting their lives to the fellowship and service of this Ashram. Please pray for them.

Yours on behalf of the least of these
His brothers and Sisters in our villages,

SAVARIRAYAN JESUDASON.

Christukula Ashram

Tirupattur, North Arcot District

Training for Village work :—May to June, 1937.

As usual training students for village work began on the 18th May and ended on the 15th June.

<i>Names of students and leaders.</i>	<i>Place.</i>	<i>Province.</i>
1 Thomas	Madura	Madras.
2 L. Sundaram	Vellore	do
3 Robert Chelliah	do	do
4 Vedamanickam	do	do
5 Arumainayagam	do	do
6 Durai Savarirayan	do	do
7 Poobalan	Yekhambara Nellore	do
8 Pakianadhan	Arni	do
9 Singaram	do	do
10 Durairaj Peter	Cuddalore	do
11 Gnanamrita Raj	Erode	do
12 Gnanayudhan	Tinneveli	do
13 Raja Savarirayan	Madras	do
14 S. J. Satyamurti	do	do
15 Philip Devaraj	do	do
16 V. D. Sahayam	Tiruttani	do
17 Dr. S. Jesudason	The Ashram	do
18 Dr Roberts	Giddalur (Kurnool Dist)	do
19 C. Shanmugasundaram	The Ashram	do
20 P. Swamidas	do	do
21 S. Kandasami	do	do
22 John Abboy	Miraj	Bombay.

The aim of this year's study and work was to investigate the economic condition of the villages around the Ashram. The number of students who responded to the invitations sent out from the Ashram exceeded that of previous years, and points to the fact of their interest in service for the villages.

During the first two weeks a few village work experts delivered lectures on the economic condition of the villages and stressed the need for rural service. M. R. Ry. Adinarayana Chettiar of Salem in an able manner, dealt with the economic and financial conditions of the villages. We were struck by the comparisons he drew between India and other countries. He referred to the great help rendered by the Co-operative Societies in other countries and emphasised the great need for opening similar Societies in our country to improve the economic condition of our villages. Dr. J. C. Kumarappa, Secretary of the All-India village Industries Association, while lecturing on village economics and industries, explained the aims of the All-India Village Industries Association, pointed out its usefulness, and stated emphatically and fervently that Village Industry would be the salvation of our country. M. R. Ry. Shankararayana Iyer, the founder of Gokulam, Madras, spoke from his experiences of Gokulam on "Uplift work among depressed classes". He said that we could

divide a man's life into two great parts "Feeling of the Flesh," and "Feeling of the soul" and pointed out that life's purpose is to overcome the feeling of the flesh. M. R. Ry. Samundi Gounder, Natrampalli, Tirupattur while speaking on 'Villagers and Education' emphasised the fact that the education of the villagers would mean freedom to our country. Father Bill Lash of the Poona Ashram gave us a devotional address and Celebrated Holy Communion one Sunday morning. The sevak (Dr. S. Jesudason) spoke to us on the spiritual basis needed for service in the villages at the opening meeting of the training school.

Srimati Visalakshi, Madras, taught us many new Tamil Christian lyrics in the most suitable tunes (ragams) fitting their meaning. She made us realise our deficiency in both foreign and Tamil music and succeeded in creating a new, strong desire for proficiency in Tamil ragams. We have learned a number of new songs.

Vidwan Varadaraja Mudaliyar, Tirupattur spoke very powerfully on "Tamil and Tamil Nadu" as to make the volunteers feel the excellence of the Tamil language and arouse in the Volunteers a devotion to Tamil. M.R. Ry. Sivaswami, Secretary to the Servants of India Society, Madras Branch, dealt with the students' attention to the fact that it was very important

to deal with it, before actually tackling other village problems. Rev. R. Keithan, an agent of the All-India Village Industrial Association, gave talks based on his village experiences around Devakottah. He urged that the village workers' should go as friends, ready to be taught, and should induce villagers to start village uplift work for themselves. Further, the Ashram doctors taught us village sanitation and how to render "First Aid". Thus fully equipping ourselves for village work we left the Ashram on the 28th May, for Madavalam Ashram.

The General Economic State of India: Every country's progress is largely influenced by its economic condition. There is a Tamil proverb to the effect :—

That the spear can pierce only as far as it can reach,

Money reaches to a far greater depth.

The economic state affects every branch of activities. Of the 350 million population in India about 315 millions *i.e.*, 90% are villagers. Further 75% of the population are farmers. The average debt per peasant is about 50 rupees, whereas his average annual income is only 50 rupees. How is he to meet the debt ! When such is the condition is it necessary to point out the importance of Co-operative Societies and Co-operative Banks ? In Britain, there is a Bank for every

3,500 people whereas in India the rate is but one to 4,40,000. Industry and Trade help to improve the economic condition of every country. In our country out of the total population only 4½% are engaged in industrial pursuits. The average income of an Indian workman is about 12 rupees, as compared with 412 rupees for a British workman. The Indian peasants have work for little over six months in a year. This being the case, they have ample time at their disposal for Industrial work. Agricultural experts are of the opinion that the Indian peasants can finish their work within three months, if they use efficient agricultural implements. There is no doubt there would be some improvement in the economic condition of our people, if they would learn to spend their leisure time in profitable occupations. Hence it is our duty (we the so-called educated friends of the villagers), to give instruction as to the value of Industrial work. Those who are in high appointments and have much influence, should induce the Government to give all possible assistance in this respect. As we are backward in Industries we export raw materials worth about 158.88, crores of rupees and buy back their finished articles worth about 142.75 crores of rupees. This is indeed a great loss to our poor country. The heavy debts, ignorance and incapacity for making necessary articles leave our people bereft of all hope and reduce them to a state of deplorable, fatalistic pessimism.

The Villages visited on the plains.

Madavalam and its Suburbs. *29th May to 4th June—general facts of this locality*; the condition of the villages in this area is similar to that of the whole North Arcot District. As there is no river very little Nanja (wet) lands are available. The land tax is slightly higher than in other places. Many of the people are servants of the Petty Zamindars. The majority of the people living in this area are farmers. The punja lands are insufficient and so cannot yield enough for the villagers' mere sustenance. Many of the villagers carry heavy debts and are not careful to grow profitable crops. There is as already stated, the practical difficulty of getting water. There are only a few wells and often one must dig more than 30 feet to reach a sufficient water level. Further we saw no one using modern agricultural implements. Bulls are so weak and emaciated, that they are useless for hard labour. The villagers do no industrial work. In some villages there are weavers but they have no organisation. A few Adi-dravidas, take to rope making and basket weaving. They get only a few annas per week for market expenses.

1. **Madavalam and Madapally Cheries.** Of all the cheries (quarters of depressed classes) in this locality, Madapally is the largest with about three-hundred houses. In this village Manikkam is the only young man who has finished his Higher Elementary School education.

He is taking teachers' training this year. The others have no desire for education. They are very unclean and eat beef. Only a few own lands and the rest work as coolies in the fields of people of higher caste. Some people know how to make coir ropes and baskets. Most of them are drunkards and spend their income in drink. But the Madavalam cherie due to the influence of the Ashram is quite a contrast to this village. That the night school hitherto conducted, by the Ashram workers is now closed is a great pity. But it gave us much delight to learn that some of the children go to the Madavalam Higher Elementary School. Some of the people in this cherie own lands and others go to the Javadi hills to cut bamboo to sell and thus earn about 12 annas per head. People here do not drink.

2. Paramaruttur. This village is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the north-west of Madavalam. Here are about 100 houses and a Panchayat School. The people are somewhat interested in education and they keep this village clean. Many of them are farmers and own lands. They do no Industrial work.

3. Pudukottah Koilur. In these villages and the vicinity some Roman Catholic Missionaries are working. Many of the people are farmers. We asked one man "What do you do when you have no work?" He replied cheerfully, "Of course we do no work!" All the people here are R. C. Christians.

4. **Kathirampatti.** This is an ideal village. The Brahmin teacher is interested in social work. It was a surprise to us to see more than 60 children in the school, in this small village. When we spoke about village work and about Jesus Christ all were very much interested. The village debt is lower than in other villages.

5. **Silandampalli.** Here are about 200 houses and most of the people are weavers. They have no Association, either to send orders for yarn or to dispose of their woven cloth. One man supplies them with yarn. One of the weavers complained of the recent rise in the price of yarn, but he did not know the reason for such fluctuation. There is also a panchayat school, but the weavers, keep their children at home to help in weaving. As is usual in weavers quarters, this village is not kept clean.

The cherie of this village has over 50 houses, yet they have no facility to get drinking water. Water is nearly a mile away. So this cherie needs a well. The school in this cherie is closed.

6. **Agaram:** This village consists of 120 houses. Here is an ideal school and the two teachers showed keen interest in the village uplift work. There are about 30 weavers' houses. The weavers work for daily wages. Of the 10 potters' families none of them possess land, but all live by their trade.

7. Krishnapuram. This village is at the foot of the Elagiri Hill, to the north east of Madavalam. Many of the people living here are farmers. A few of the cherie people are working under the petty Zamindars, almost as slaves. In this village, feuds and quarrels often occur and a lot of money is spent in litigation. This village has a Panchayat school. The people complained of the closing of the Ashram work in Madavalam and requested us to continue it.

The work in the Javadi Hills. 5th June to 10th June. On the 4th June, we left Madavalam for the Javadi Hills, but stopped at Rajapalayam, in the Zamindar's rest house before we actually started our strenuous journey. Dr. Roberts was with us. That evening, after light refreshment, we spoke to the people about village uplift and sanitation. It was a big gathering of cherie people, but the caste people did not appear as we had our meeting in the cherie. When we finished our work the people besought us to come again. Early the next morning, after chota, some of the coolies carried the heavy things while the volunteers, carried their bedding and light things. Some of us enjoyed the climbing up the hill and were, prepared "to bear one another's burdens!" At midday amidst fun and frolic, we reached our destination, Perumpalli. Friends are requested to refer to the annexed 1933 report, for further information of the Javadi hills. Here on the hills are three 'Nadus', consisting

of 10 or 12 villages. On the whole there are 32 villages scattered on the hills. Generally these villages have cultivated land around them. Though the people living here are called 'Malayalis'. (i.e., hill people) they are Tamil speaking Gounders, but they have no relationship whatsoever with Gounders of the plains. Every village is fenced with strong bamboo fence to prevent animals from entering in. They keep their animals in their respective fields. The water supply, specially drinking water is scarce and unwholesome. The Javadi Hills are malarial and we found many people to be victims of malaria with enlarged spleens. Who is to care for them and treat them? The 'Gounder' the headman of each village is the sole caretaker of the whole village. We seldom found educated people—i.e. people who know how to write and read, their mother tongue. There is no one to give educational or medical aid.

The Economic condition of these people. Many people possess land and others are the employees of the headman of the village. Nanja wet land is not to be found but Ragi—cumbu, varagu, sami and such like crops are grown on the punja land; a very few cultivate paddy on their dry lands. We noticed, that the headmen alone have granaries. Everybody has a herd of cattle numbering about 20. They graze them on the uncultivated hill slopes and keep them at night in their open fields, but they do not feed them, or

protect them when it rains. Any how the cattle are considerably stronger than those of the plains. The people do not drink the milk nor give it to their children who are generally underfed. They make ghee out of the milk and sell it to their Gounder—the headman of the village. They know the hill price but they do not know the actual price down on the plains. They do not sell their grain but manage to get a sum of money for their miscellaneous family expenses, by selling ghee, Jack fruit etc. Some times they earn a little by carrying things for people like us, who visit them.

They rear pigs which roam about the village scavenging—they are the only scavengers! The people eat pork, but not fish. “Chee, who will eat the water-worms?” they would say! These men know no handi-craft; people must come from the plains to dig their wells.

Though uneducated, they observe strictly, their social customs. Often they would refuse to attend our meetings, unless we got their Gounder’s permission. Their leader can excommunicate them, if they misbehave and violate their communal laws. For the whole tribe there are three chief Gounders, who decide differences in their court of justice—Panchayat.

They are harmless and simple minded people and are extremely hospitable. But alas! their utter

ignorance and their heavy debts pained us and touched our hearts deeply. ' Whom shall I send, and who will go for us ', says the voice of God even now. Is there any one to say " Lord, here am I ; send me. " *Mr. Siluvaimuthu—Praise the Lord ! here is one who has responded to the anxious and pathetic longing of God for these villagers Brother Siluvaimuthu has heard this call and has already started to work among the uncared for Malayalis of the Javadi Hills. He stays in Pudur, which is the biggest of all the villages and lives there by the voluntary support of the people. This is a good method to start with. But one has to be careful. One need not be anxious, if one continues to be a real follower of Christ. Bro. Siluvaimuthu has opened a day school for the children helps and advises the villagers whenever necessary. He has not neglected to preach the gospel by word and by life.

The step he has taken, in living in the midst of these poor and ignorant people, is really commendable. It would be good for him, to have some one to work with and to be in fellowship with him. The people in Perampalli, are very anxious to get him over to their place. May God be with him and use him as His powerful witness among the people on the Javadi hills. Whenever he gets ill with malaria

*Mr. Siluvaimuthu has now left this work as he has taken up a Govt. Job.

he comes to the Ashram for some rest and recuperation.

1. **Perampalli.** This is a small village containing 30 houses. The headman of this village pays land revenue—a kist of 60 rupees annually. The people drink the water in the brook, which runs close by. This village is not clean. We came across people having enlarged spleens. Dr. Robert advised the village leader to purchase quinine and supply it free to his men.

2. **Sherkanoor.** This village has about 30 houses. We were caught in the rain, while returning. We saw a hut at a little distance and when we rushed into it we were asked not to enter. We came to know that those who live in it were low caste men who are at the service of the leader. Thus we can understand the way in which the caste system spreads.

3. **Chinavattanoor.** This is a fairly large village and has more than 60 houses. The headman of the whole Malayali community lives here. When we visited the village in the morning it was very unclean. So we wanted to sweep, but the people would not allow us. When in the evening we visited the same village, it was a matter of great surprise and delight to see the village very clean. All the people are farmers. They expressed their desire to have

a teacher, to teach their children. Some of the people are debtors to the headman.

Pudur and Suburbs. Our work around Perampalli was over by the 6th June and we started our journey to Pudur on the 7th June. We stayed there till the 10th June. The journey to Pudur was very difficult and it tried our nerves. We had to ascend several hills and descend into several valleys. This time also the volunteers were not disheartened but all of us were terribly tired. It was now that we had an experience of the hardships of a journey on these hills.

1. **Pudur** is situated almost at the top-most part of the hill. Plain cultivable lands are all around the village. Here is the Govt. Forest Bungalow. The school in this village had been closed for several years. Just recently Mr. Siluvaimuthu has reopened it. The Karnam lives in this village and he has so great an influence that the people are prepared to work for him, even without wages. These people are very much frightened of the Forest officers, for these often go to extract money and things from the inhabitants.

2. **Molalai** Here are about 20 houses and this village has a strongly built, Siva temple. The villagers were intensely interested and responded eagerly when we spoke to them and showed magic lantern pictures.

It was difficult to make them understand the need for education. We met a man, who like Jacob working in his uncle's house for his bride, has to work for a period of fifteen years. He is now in the eighth year and he has yet to complete seven years! His practical wants are met and the bride is given a few rupees, at the end of every year. The people take loans. We met people returning from Matrapalli market, where they sold their Jack fruit etc. and purchased a few things for their household.

3. **Chittor.** In this village there is a Vishnu temple. For the festival the people invite the other villagers through their headmen and feed them, all together with the temple 'prasadam.' But for the festivities to their local deities, they invite their relatives to their houses. We saw several sick people here. A woman was running a high temperature, and on administering medicine, she said that she would take the medicine on the following day—that day being auspicious. It was a sad thing for us to hear, when we left the people, that she had a child, which was then at the point of death and that the child died. This village is not tidy.

4. **Aramalaipet.** This is a very small village having only 17 houses. The people including the headman are very poor. It was very encouraging to us, to note, that as the result of the advice given

by the 1935, Ashram Volunteers, they keep their well clean with a fence all around it. This village is kept very neat.

5. **Valuthalaipet.** In this village, there are about 40 houses and their streets and houses are kept very tidy. Almost all the people possess lands. They told us with much delight that they go to Tiruvanamalai temple twice a year. So we all spoke about the Bhakti (devotion) to God. They want a school and promised to help the teacher in all possible ways.

The real need of these villages is friends, who can take part in their joys and sorrows and thus identify themselves with them. Though we are more enlightened and educated than they are, it is highly essential that we should go to them, humbling ourselves as one of them. They keep our national heritage *i.e.*, devotion to God. We want people who can direct these God-fearing ones to the true God, our heavenly Father. It is necessary that we should educate them and thus remove their ignorance and sense of fear. They also want friends to tell them, about sanitation and to administer medical aid. It is really a great pity that these people living, in so many villages, and easily prone to diseases, do not have even a small dispensary.

Though they do not know how to express it, the sense of the following lines, from a Tamil hymn is expressed by their condition.

“ We are scattered in the wilderness.

We are beaten cruelly.

There is none to pity us.

There is none to question (why we are
beaten).

Thanks to the service rendered by the Ashram friends for the last two or three years, their painful state is revealed. The Ashram friends have unfailing sympathy for them, but they are often discouraged and disheartened, for lack of response to their appeal, to secure workers, who will care for these Malayali people. The N. M. S. is also taking interest in them. Here again the question of volunteers arises.

These villagers have no true freedom and are ignorant of their true Father, God. It is a challenge to us ! Do not the words of our Lord Jesus Christ “ In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me,” appeal to you, youngmen ? Let the villagers’ cry for help ring in the ears of the sons of Baratha Matha. Now is the time to decide and offer ourselves for the service of the Lord. Oh ! ye pure-minded, pure in life and patriotic young men !

Let us shine ! Let your light be set up in the Javadi hills.

“ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven.” Matt 5 : 16.

STUDENTS OF THE ASHRAM
SUMMER TRAINING SCHOOL FOR
VILLAGE WORKERS—1937.

Christukula Ashram

Tirupattur, North Arcot Dt.

Village Work—22 May to 15th July 1933.

This year, our group had representatives from Madura, Madras, Tiruvannamalai, Travancore, Vellore, Ranipet, and Assam (N. India). Many of us were students and a few were teachers. As usual, the first two weeks of our stay in the Ashram were primarily intended to make a critical study of village problems from various aspects. During the other two weeks we were sent to surrounding villages for regular village work. In previous years the volunteers had to cook their own meals during their stay in the villages. But a little change was made this

year. As some were new and quite unaccustomed to cooking and it would have taken most of our time to prepare food, a cook was appointed. The villages, around Madavalam, where there is a branch Ashram, were first visited. This branch Ashram is situated in such a place that volunteers residing in it can have easy access to the remote villages on the Jawadi and Elagiri Hills, bereft of all civic and ameliorative privileges. The aim of the Branch Ashram is not mainly for medical aid, but to attend to the social needs of the villagers and to show them the way to the freedom God wants them to have. May God grant that some worthy individuals will volunteer in response to this irresistible call of the villages around. At present Dr. Ross goes there on Mondays when people crowd in large numbers for treatment. Mondays being market days, it is easy for other villagers also to come to this place. It is our ardent prayer that we should be more helpful to the far off villagers of the malarial regions on the top of Jawadi Hills through this Branch Ashram. Standing on the terrace of the Branch Ashram, one could have a pleasant view of the distant hills around, and the far off lakes in the midst of green fields. The Tirupattur Ashram Church towers and other buildings were visible from here.

At the end of our training in the Ashram the 25th of May we left for Madavalam with Miss G. Visalakshmi

of Madras and Mr. Chenchiah of Pudukotta. It was a pleasant surprise when we were unexpectedly welcomed by the Bajana (singing) party of Vatchiravelu Gounder on our arrival at Madavalam. To the large gathering that had assembled on our arrival at the branch Ashram, Miss Visalakshi spoke on the "Strength of unity" after a short musical programme by herself.

After having stayed here for 7 days we proceeded to the Jawadi Hills, on the evening of Sunday 4-6-33 and halted at Rajapalayam a village at the foot of the Hills. A few coolies were engaged to carry some of the heavy bundles and we started after our morning Sunday worship. Every one was loaded with his bedding and miscellaneous articles necessary for camp life. Though heavily loaded, our journey up the hill was full of merriment. Some of the forest officials who had their sons treated in our Ashram Hospital were kind enough to send guides. A strenuous walk up the hill brought us to a dilapidated forest rest house in Serkanoor where we had our lunch. Water was not available in the vicinity. As there was no room for all of us, we left the place in the scorching summer sun, and crossed several hills and valleys and finally reached Puthoor at 4 o'clock in the evening. Almost the whole day was spent in walking and we were dead tired when we reached our destination. We stayed in the Forest

rest house till Saturday and returned to Madavalam. Here follows the report of our work.

Daily Routine. Our daily work began with morning Sandhya worship. This was primarily intended for self examination and dedication. When chota was over we left for the surrounding villages carrying light refreshment for noon. We were divided into groups and the following villages were visited during our stay. Madavalam, Pichanoor, Selanthampalli, Agaram, Kathirambatti, Thathanvalasai, and Bommikuppam. Whenever we could not bring the villagers into a group, we did individual work. Some of the subjects we discussed with them were: Sanitation, co-operation and the value of co-operative banks, education, the goal of life. We never hesitated to condemn such vices as drinking, factions and illiteracy which hinder the proper progress of the villages. The magic lantern shows, Kalakshepams and other musical entertainments were well attended in all the villages. When we had a chance to meet some of the leading men in the village, we studied the economic side of the village by friendly enquiries.

Jawadi Hills. Medical-work formed the integral part of our programme because that was the easiest approach to those people who misunderstand strangers at first sight. We became friendly with them as we stayed and those who hid themselves first gladly came forward

to receive medicine after a few days. On two nights we gave them the gospel message and they were very much interested in it. The instinct of worship and the fear of God was quite evident among these Hill tribes.

Names of the place visited. (on the plains) Madavalam, Madapalli, Agaram, Selanthamballi, Kathirambatti, Bom-mikuppam, Thathanvalasai, Kalathoor, Krishnapuram, Samudram and Pitchanoor. (On the Jawadi Hills) Puthoor, Molalai, Arumalaipet and Chittoor.

Names of the Volunteers :—

	Gurukul.	Madras.
(1) S. Devanesan	"	"
(2) Jesupadam Pandian	"	"
(3) J. Sathianadan	"	"
(4) Sigamony	"	"
(5) Baliah Perumal	"	"
(6) Victor Sigamony,	Danish Mission High School,	Tiruvanamalai.
(7) Rajarathinam Savarirayan,	Medical School,	Madras.
(8) Wesley Ray,	Theological College, Jubbulpore (Central India).	
(9) Jebanesan	High School Teacher	Arcot.
(10) Deva Raj	"	" Ranipet.

(11) Edward David	Teacher Ashram Tirupattur.
(12) Shanmugasundaram	" "
(13) Dr. Ross	" "
(14) Dr. Savarirayan Jesudason	" "
(15) Sanandam	" "

Only this year the Ashram started work in the Jawadi Hills. As far as we could see we could find no one who had gone for social or religious work to these hills. The Government Forest officials, may know these villages, but one could see there seems to be a kind of fear among the villagers at the sight of these men appearing in Uniforms.

Jawadi Hills. The Jawadi Hills are about 10 miles east of the Christukula Ashram running for 20 miles in length, north east to south west. From Andiappanoor in the north east and Chengam on the south west, this range abounds in dense forest and valuable trees like Teak and Sandalwood. The villages on the whole area, about 75 in number, are all situated near cultivable lands on the top of the hills. The inhabitants are Tamil speaking people. Their main occupation is dry cultivation. The soil is not fertile. There is water scarcity everywhere, and it is very difficult to get even drinking water. Except for a few pits resembling wells there are no lakes or rivers. Malaria and Hookworm are the common diseases. The people present an appearance of poverty and starvation,

and look lifeless. Their houses are low and are not properly ventilated. Windows are completely absent in all the houses, for it is superstitiously believed that sun light should not be allowed to fall into a house. Houses are totally dark inside. The space between two rows of houses is kept neat and tidy. As some temples are built within the village itself nobody is allowed to wear sandals inside the village and they will not use them either, in spite of the fact that Hookworm diseases are prevalent. The temples are dedicated mainly to goddesses like, 'Thukki' (Durga), and villagers' names are merely derivatives of their goddesses, like, Thukkan, and Thukki. There are also temples of Siva and Vishnu. At Chittoor, there is a well built small temple with all the architectural decorations that are found in the plains. The spots where these temples are built, have a natural grandeur all about them. The Thurkiamman temple at Puthoor is a striking example of the above. One could see many small bells hanging from the branches of the trees around the temple.

The "Malayalies" as they are called here are kind hearted and extremely hospitable to strangers when once they understand them. Nothing like cowardice or deceitfulness could be found in them. They are all simple and frank. Jack fruits are cheap and are sent to the markets on the plains every week. The people

are 100 per cent illiterate. There is nothing that could be called a school in all these villages. People proudly said to us that there was a school at Puthoor, conducted by one among them, but on visiting it once, we found the teacher sleeping in a cart, and a few boys roaming about, some repeating verses and some the alphabets. They live in the midst of charming natural scenery. The average height of the Javadi Hills is between 2,500 to 3,000 ft. but Elagiri Hills which is on the opposite side, have a maximum height of 4,000 ft. People living in Elagiri are related to these men and they are of the same community. Puthoor is well situated and has a cool climate throughout the year.

One day a "Malayali" told us the curious story of how his fore-fathers came to these mountains. There were 3 brothers in the town of Conjeevaram whose hobby was that of hunting. One day they started on a hunting expedition. They rode on three horses and while leaving their wives they said that in case their hounds alone returned home, it meant that these three had lost their lives on the way. On the way they had to cross the River Palar, which was in high flood. (At present this river is ever dry!). With great difficulty the horses and men crossed over but the poor hounds could not, and returned home. Their wives on seeing the dogs alone, considered themselves widows. These three men married three women whom they captured and settled in the different hills of this part of the country hills. The second



The village on the Javadhi Hills

brother took Javadi Hills for his house site and the people now trace their origin to him.

Villages in the Javadi Hills.

Puthoor. The village has become important because of the forest rest house. The villagers' houses are low with thatched roofs. Though some of the children were dirty, the grown up men and especially women were neat and clean. Malaria patients were brought to us in large numbers. We made them feel that we were their friends. Some of the villagers attended our morning and evening prayers that we held on a beautiful grass-plot just outside the village. These people became interested in us and on their request we held a meeting in the village one night, when speeches on village sanitation, were made and Gospel stories told. Almost the whole village was there for this meeting. In the evening we played with the school boys and taught them songs and games. The teacher at Puthoor has very little education.

Arumalajpet. It is a village at a distance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of Puthoor. The important work here was again medical help. Many people were found to be suffering from tooth ache.

Chittoor is a small village about 2 miles from Puthoor. People were afraid when we first entered the village, thinking that we were some government

officials, but as we stayed there, they became very friendly and presented us with jack fruit. They were very loving and entertaining. We met one suffering from guinea worm and advised him to have regular treatment so that it might not be infectious to others. The temple in this village is built in a quiet place away from the village.

VILLAGES VISITED ON THE PLAINS.

Thatbanvalasai:—It is a hamlet about 4 miles east of Madavalam. The path leading to the village passes across dry fields. About half way there is a beautiful Mariamman temple with trees all around. We used to halt here on our way and talk to those who gathered there. There are about 150 houses and a few only have had thatched roofs. The lands around it are very fertile and one could see mango topes, plantain trees in the vicinity. There is scarcity of water. People look happy and are economically better off than in other villages. We saw children and men with itch and sulphur ointment was given. Conjunctivitis too was common. Plague and Cholera, they say, are not prevalent.

The Karnam of the village was not in favour of our visit and the only schoolmaster in the village too was equally irresponsive and indifferent to some of our enquiries. We were not discouraged. We visited them and sang songs in the Karnam's house,

but the teacher did not allow us to teach a single song to the school boys. Things changed gradually; the teacher became interested in us, and told all about his village, and the little he is doing in picketting toddy shops. It was a thrilling story when he narrated how he actually drove away a drunkard and broke his toddy pot one evening. The only discouraging feature about this village is the habit of drink prevalent among all classes of people including men and women—and even among children too! They themselves admit the evil of drink but say they are victims.

There are 40 children in the school, the teacher residing in the school itself. He is a Brahmin and yet he is very much interested in social work. He mingles freely with people of other castes and is setting a very good example to the villagers.

The chief occupation of the village is cultivation of groundnuts. Grains are abundantly grown. There is no cottage industry.

We had time only to attend to some of the patients that were brought to us. We sang some songs and left for Bommikuppam.

Bommikuppam :—There is a marked difference between Bommikuppam and Thathanvalasi, though they are only 2 furlongs apart. The village looks

very neat with long streets even at a distance. The houses are low but the verandahs adjoining the houses are spacious and are neatly kept. In a large meadow under two tall trees are situated the temple on one side and the school on the other. The well near the temple supplies drinking water to the village. Water collected near the well goes through a channel to the school garden. During summer months when all the wells in neighbouring villages dry up they say there is plenty of water here. The "Cherie" where the outcast people live is just outside the main village. This too is neat. The only noteworthy feature is there are no habitual drunkards even among the outcastes. There are 2 members from Bommi-kuppam, in Thathanvalasai panchayet.

The villagers were kind and we received a sympathetic response. They joined in our singing and were much interested in playing some of the village-games with us.

We held a Kalakshapam (singing and speaking) at their request and 4 of us spoke on village sanitation. Many people including out-castes attended the function. Some of these villagers who had received treatment in the Ashram Hospital were very hospitable. The head man of the village takes special care of the education of the children and believes that education would be an asset to the villager. The present

school building is an old one and they are building a new school. It is happy news that there is one school only for the high and low caste boys. The common disease is a kind of skin trouble. The well these low caste people use is not built round on sanitary methods. Medical help was again the main work. On the last day of our stay, they requested us to stay for some more days and promised to supply us with all food stuffs. We had to decline with regret, as we were expected in the next village. During our stay we found some specially interested in improving village conditions, and they need our continual help.

Madavalam & Madapalli. These two villages considerably bigger in size than the others we visited, are close to each other. There is higher elementary school in Madavalam. A detailed account of these 2 villages was published last year, and hence, we like to deal only with the Cheries attached to these villages. The Madapalli Cherie (quarters of depressed classes) is about 2 furlongs, from the Branch Ashram. There are about 400 houses, forming a separate village by itself. The main village is about a furlong away.

There is no village industry. Self reliance is totally absent among these people. They depend upon others even to do the little they need.

They know very little of the outside world. Some of them have lands but most of them are working under high caste men. Some of them do cooly work and a few go to the hills to bring bamboo for making baskets. They earn about 4 to 5 as, daily, and most of the amount is spent on toddy in the evening. Patriotism is totally absent and there is nothing like co-operation among them except the fact that they belong to the same community. In such a big village one could count on one's fingers those who do not drink. The whole village appears as though it is a lunatic asylum in the evening. Such is the havoc of drink among them. A small boy of 7 years on enquiry told us laughingly that he shares with his father the toddy pot.

Child marriage is common and the effect of it is very apparent as one passes along the streets.

Itch, skin diseases, and syphilis were the common diseases we noticed. The whole village was not clean. Some of the women had very bad teeth and the teeth were all blackened. The well constructed by the local Board is out of use and they take drinking water from 2 other wells. There are no latrines. Though many of them had cattle, the cowdung was not kept in a proper way so as to be used as manure. Neither a Library nor any Association,

for the betterment of the village could be found in a village of 400 houses. The man who had collected some money among them for building a school seemed to have used it all for his private purposes. There was none to check him.

We could see a mud wall and nothing else like a school as the outcome of the money collected. Though some of the adults are anxious to have a night school they had no place to have it. Only 23 boys are entered in the day school register. Out of nearly 100 School going children in this village, but only 15 of them attend the school regularly!

Samudram. (Cherie). It is a hamlet of 50 houses. There are, a well built Muthumariamman temple in the heart of the village and, a Vigneswaran temple outside the village but not a school anywhere. There are boys and girls of school going age but none of the villagers felt the necessity of a school, in their midst. Only few are in possession of lands and the richest of them pay about Rs. 15 as land tax. There is no proper road to the village and open fields are used as public latrines.

Pitchanoor :—On the south-east about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile off is Kalvai Pappurai, on the west is Samudram cherie, on the north Podanoor and on the east is

Muthambatti. This village is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Madavalam.

The following caste people live here—Vellalar, Vanniar, Nayakar, Vaniar, Ottar, Reddy, and Kammalar. The total population is about 1500. There are nearly 200 houses out of which 100 belong to the Velialars. 15 to the Vanniars 20 to the Nayakars 12 to the Ottars 4 to the Reddis 2 to the Kammalars and 10 to the Vaniars.

Work :—Agricultural work. A man may get nearly 4 annas and a woman $2\frac{1}{2}$ annas as daily wages for cooly work.

Commerce in the Village :—Grain, Rice, Ground-nuts, and Dhall are sent to the neighbouring markets, Betel leaves are also cultivated here. They get exchanged for things which they could not grow in their village.

Lands :—The whole village of Krishnapuram is under the Mittader, Mr. Sundaram Ayar. He pays Rs. 1500 as land tax at an average amount of Rs. 2 per acre of dry land.

Water supply :—There is no river but a small tank where they collect rain water which is used for irrigational purposes. During summer months the tank becomes dry. A well surrounded by a strong

stone wall is the only source of drinking water. The officers of the agricultural department visit them occasionally, once or twice a year.

Temples:—Mariammen temple, Vinayagar temple, Easwaran temple, Poongavana temple, Pajanai-madem. Only in the Easwaran temple there is daily worship. Because of party feeling in the village a temple building began 10 or 15 years ago is still unfinished.

School:—The teacher himself seems to observe caste difference. This is the only school where there is a 4th class. The number on the rolls were 40 out of whom three were girls. The daily attendance comes to about 13! There is no low caste boy. The teacher has studied only up to 5th standard and he gets from the Government Rs. 52 3-0 as teaching grant per year. Apart from this he gets about 2 to 3 as. from every school boy. He has been working in the school for the last three years and pays about Rs. 5 as rent for the school building. Even Saturday is a working day here. People who could read and write may be about 60 to 70. Some of the families we were told had gone to Natal (Africa), Singapore. These people knew very little of the National struggle.

STUDENTS OF THE ASHRAM
SUMMER TRAINING SCHOOL FOR
VILLAGE WORKERS—1937.

CHRISTU-KULA ASHRAM.**Tirupattur,***North Arcot, S. India.***16-12-1937.****CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR****1937-38***Dear Friends Far and Near,*

I know it is now too late for this little note of Christmas and New Year Greetings to reach friends far away in time, but I wish to send you all the heartfelt greetings of the Season from the Family at this Ashram. In a world filled with the darkness of dismay and despair because of "man at war with man" either potentially or in very deed, whither shall we look for a gleam of light except to that Star that guided the Wise Men of the East to the BABE at Bethlehem? May that Light that began to illumine this world from the manger on Christmas morn and later shone resplendent from Calvary's Cross and the opened Grave, turn men and women from this short-sighted madness of a materialistic and selfish world to the larger and truer vision of His Kingdom in which His disciples rejoice now and which shall last for ever and ever.

This note has been delayed because among many other duties that engage one's time at the Ashram, I have been on an educational tour with the Ashram

School (village) children and some of their teachers to some historical spots and other places of general interest in the Tamil Nad. To me it was not merely an educational tour in a narrow sense, but a time of intimate fellowship with these innocent little ones whose comradeship had a purifying and inspiring effect on one.

Paton has not yet booked his passage for the return journey but he hopes to be with us sometime about February 1938. We hope to have the annual meeting for the "Friends of the Ashram" soon after his return or probably about Easter (April 15-17) whichever time might be more suitable to our Friends. Kindly let us know what you feel would be the most suitable time.

Dr. Mammen has left and Dr. Thomas had to go home because of his father's illness, but we are really thankful that Dr. Rajarathinam Savarirayan ("Raja") who is now a fully qualified doctor has been working here since last October. We want you to specially remember him, Swamidas, and Rajanaygam who have dedicated themselves for Ashram Service. David a fully qualified male nurse has recently joined us. Both Swamidas and Jeevothama have passed their Dispenser's Examination.

We had an inspiring time when Dr. Hume visited us last month. Both here at the Ashram and at a

public meeting at Tirupattur he gave us a very lucid lecture on the conflict between Japan and China. Our New School building has just been completed and the work in the Schools and Hospital goes on as usual.

Before finishing the letter I feel I ought to mention one or two things that have happened this year because they are tokens of the deep love and sympathy some of God's children have for this Ashram and its work. An unknown Indian friend has sent Rs. 1000, and another Indian lady has sent her jewels for this work. The anonymous nature of these gifts makes them all the more precious.

The Dictograph Telephone installation has just been completed. This makes the work much easier as a good bit of distance intervenes between the different buildings of the Ashram specially between the Hospital and the living rooms. We are very thankful to Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Forrester-Paton who have kindly presented this to us.

If any land is in urgent need of self sacrificing and consecrated leaders and workers more than any other, it is this dear land of India. The Christmas season reminds us of the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ who though He was rich yet He became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich. May this grace of His stimulate and urge many to pour

out their lives in self sacrificing service for this needy land.

Yours in His love,
S. JESUDASON.

CHRISTUKULA ASHRAM
Tirupattur,
North Arcot, S. India.

Christmas and New Year
1938-39

DEAR FRIENDS,

Once more we joyfully unite in sending you our Christmas greetings and sincere good wishes to each and all of you. We are sorry that we have not been more faithful in our correspondence but Christmas time at least must bring us all together in thought, and we join with you in adoration of the infant Jesus in all His lowliness and love. What wonderful faith and daring that God should so put Himself at the mercy of a world in which cruelty, oppression and crime were rampant. Are we still prepared to believe that truth and lowliness and love can triumph and are triumphing in this world to-day wherever men and women are

willing to follow God's lead and to obey Him alone ? We praise Him because we know that there are thousands who are one with us in seeking to honour God in this way and who are experiencing His power in their daily lives.

As regards news of our doings during the year first of all I (Paton) must write a few lines for myself, for last year I had the privilege of spending Christmas with my brothers and their families at Alloa (in Scotland) and these ten months in Scotland were different from previous occasions because I was drawn into close spiritual fellowship with so many people who before were complete strangers to me and I learned from them, and along with them, to place my own life more completely under God's direction and control, and so to be used by Him in winning other lives in a way that I had not experienced before. This was a great joy and inspiration for me ; and I had also the privilege of introducing some of my new found friends to my two brothers and their families at a little farewell evening party they gave on my behalf. Jesudason has already told you that I am in fellowship with the Oxford Group so you will understand the channel through which this new experience has been coming to me. The return voyage to India on the S. S. Naldera was a very pleasant one, and I got back here to the Ashram on 20th February.

On my return I was glad to get to know the new volunteers who had come during last year, Rajanayagam and David about whom you have already heard, and also Samuel, Appadurai, Jaganathan Muthiah and Gnananayagam who had come as ashram students both for the hospital and to help us in the school. I was sorry to miss our old friends Kandasamy and Shunmuga Sanderam. The latter has gone to work with the Seva Ashram in Bangalore. During the year Devanesan left us after completing his 3 years studentship ; and also our 'agricultural specialist' and Tathil pandit, Gnananandam, felt that his calling was outside the Ashram. He is working with the Swedish Mission at Palladam in the training of village workers. We were also very sorry to lose our school headmaster Rajanayagam who had to return to his home at Coimbatore owing to his mother's ill health requiring his presence with her. With his going away we felt very anxious about getting proper teachers for the school, but the wants have been wonderfully supplied ; Edward David, a trained graduate, came and took over the headmastership, Ponniah (an ex-volunteer) and Navamoni from Madura District, and Jesudas from Palladam as well as Singararaj and Durairaj (who had been working in the hospital) filled up the gaps ; and more lately we have had two more trained men Vedamanikam and Josiah Madurainayagam (the latter just having passed his L. T. exam.)

So we are very thankful that the school has been provided for and there are now 132 children on the roll and eight standards recognised by the Education Dept. We have not been able to introduce the Wardha Scheme of education for lack of teachers trained in that method of teaching through industry and agriculture. But we have got quite a large school garden which, thanks to the efforts of one or two of the teachers along with the children, has been able to produce a good crop of tomatoes and other vegetables as well as a crop of maize. All the bigger boys are working for one hour a day at tape looms and have produced 3300 yards of bed tape which is more than sufficient to keep all our hospital beds supplied and for which we need to find a sale. Our former scholar Karuthan is supervising this work and along with two other former pupils weaving cloth for us.

We are very thankful that the three night schools have been continuing steadily, and some of the former pupils of the day school are helping our volunteers in the teaching. Some of the older boys have now a real understanding of the gospel and are trying to apply it in their lives. The night schools and also the day school are taking it in turn to stage small dramas most of which have been made up by the teachers themselves. Many of the parents and also the children from the other schools come and greatly enjoy

these performances which convey some moral lessons and help them to appreciate the value of education.

Our hospital work has greatly benefitted through the additional facilities and the quiet and cleanliness afforded by our new hospital building which we call the Suhanilayam or Abode of Health. There Swamidas and David have been in charge of the nursing and cleanliness as well as the controlling of the patients' relatives - often a difficult task. Our old hospital beds are also being used for the less acutely ill patients so that with these and the little open-air ward and the septic ward there are now about 70 beds. Except at such times as either one or both of us have been away these beds have been made full use of, and the chattram (or rest - house) across the road is usually so full with all the relatives that it forms quite a little village in itself. The quieter atmosphere in the new hospital wards has given us much greater opportunities of having talks or prayer with individual patients and we have also started having services in the wards with them, and there is every sign that they themselves appreciate help along these lines.

Apart from two doctors who came and gave us some temporary help, Raja Savariroyan has been the only qualified doctor helping us during this year. A number of our older volunteers including Jivothuma have been doing good work. Kanniah, Durairaj, Singararaj and Devanesan passed the Government

Exam. for compounders last April and at present Gnanavaram, Jaganathan, Appadurai, Muthiah and Samuel are in Madras sitting for the same exam. We very much hope that they may all be successful as this is the last examination of this type to be held; future exams. are to be on a considerably higher standard and the training is limited to only nine Govt. hospitals. This means that we can no longer take students into the Ashram on the understanding that they will be sent up for the Govt. Examination, and get their certificates. And yet we do hope to be able to train a few who may have the call to continue and work with us here in the Ashram.

This year we have had the great joy of having Mr. C. F. Andrews with us in the Ashram on several occasions staying for a week or two at a time, and also of having him with us up on the Nilgiri Hills during the hot months. Though never strong in health he seemed to be ever able to answer a huge correspondence as well as give time to the writing of important books - one especially, on Jesus Christ, has been occupying very much of his energies - attend to the many visitors who came, and also to have jolly walks and talks as well as times of quiet spiritual fellowship with those of us who were with him. He has gladly consented to make this Ashram his South Indian home.

In addition to the new hospital we have also now a building of our own for the school just across the

road from the Ashram and to the East of the Tamil library and village products museum. In the planning and the carrying through of this building (which we call Kalanilayam, the Place of Learning) we were greatly helped by Vedam Savariroyan (Raja's elder brother). And now we are still more grateful to God that he (Vedam) has been led to come and join us here as a volunteer, in which capacity he is making himself most useful not only in supervising building and repairs but also in doing secretarial work for us both, and in helping Mrs. Shreenivassa.

Both Mrs Shreenivassa and Miss Moses are continuing with us and they have been helping us in so many ways, though perhaps we only really appreciate their work at such times as they have to be away from us! The building that was planned as a home for women has now been completed, but we have changed its function and are using it as a guest house and a place where small conferences or retreats may be held and so also we have called it the Arulnilayam (The Abode of Grace).

In conclusion we feel that we require your fellowship in prayer: On the one hand there is the growing institutional work which makes demands for a constant supply of trained (or semi-trained) men, and with the pressing need of the villagers continually upon us we are often tempted to let down our standards and accept helpers who may be quite willing and efficient in their

service but who have not really given their lives to Christ. Further with all the daily routine of duties there is little time left for close personal contact with each one. So we have been feeling the need for some curtailment of the institutional work so that we can have more time for personal contact. Also we have been feeling strongly that we have to get out and spend some time in the villages. We feel that this may be a call to close the hospital for some period each year and go with our volunteers to the villages in two groups associating very freely with them as we travel about from village to village; we hope to be able to carry this out in the early part of next year.

May we appeal to you to pray for us that God may bring us into contact with some really consecrated men who feel a call to come and join us in the service of the villagers in their desperate physical, moral and spiritual need. It is there among the poorest and the lowliest and the lost that very especially Christ dwells; and may we all take up our responsibility to serve Him in the persons of those whom the world has cast off; lest He should have to say to us "Depart from Me.....for I was hungry and you gave Me no food, I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink etc. etc." So it may be that some of you who receive this may hear God calling you either in your own place or here in the Ashram to render special service in this way, or else you may know of some who may have the op-

portunity to do so ; will you please help us by putting us in touch with such ?

In order to be more definite in this matter we should let you know that we are feeling the need for one or two more fully qualified doctors ; they should be unmarried and willing to give at least one year in the first instance to this life and service Further we need two or three trained teachers and especially we are still praying for one with experience and a calling who could take over much of the responsibility for the school and act as headmaster for a number of years. In the hospital we very badly need several with nursing training and experience, men or middle-aged women, especially one who would be qualified to give our young men a training in nursing work. In the service of our simple Tamil villagers we look first of all to those whose mother tongue is Tamil, but there may also be others from other parts of India who have a call from God to work here and wish to learn the language and to identify themselves with the people ; and it might be that this may come into the hands of some one from other countries into whose heart Christ has put a real love for India and who is qualified and can make himself free to devote himself for this work.

We are sure that you will join us in prayer concerning these matters and also for the Ashram that our hearts may ever be kept open and sensitive to God's

guidance. And let us all face the New Year with renewed hope and courage as afresh we place our lives at God's disposal to be the instruments of His love and power knowing that He Himself walks with us all through the days.

With our best wishes

Your friends,

S. JESUDASON.

ERNEST F. PATON.

**CHRISTU-KULA ASHRAM,
Tirupattur,
North Arcot District.**

CHRISTMAS-1939. AND NEW YEAR-1940.

Dear friends,

We send you all our Christmas greetings of Love and Joy and Peace, through our Lord Jesus Christ. And just as 2000 years ago He came as a helpless babe into a cruel and distracted world, so again today he comes bringing us a sure message of hope, for God Himself is with us and has won the victory, the victory of suffering love. Truly to day men's hearts are failing them for fear as they look on those things that are coming on the

earth, and we need to give heed to our Lord's words "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

The ancient Ashrams of India stood for the sacred principle of Ahimsa (that is harmlessness or love to all living things). So to us as members of an Ashram this is a great testing time of our faith in love as the only way to overcome evil. Unshaken by the forces of hatred around us may we all be used to release into this world the dynamic flood of Christ's wondrous love, and so hasten the coming of God's Kingdom on this earth.

We are sending herewith an English translation of extracts from the diary of a tour we undertook through the villages of this and the neighbouring district (N. Arcot and Salem). The reasons for closing the hospital for a month in order to undertake this tour are stated in detail in the first part of the account. We would like to hear, dear friends of the Ashram, your own reactions to the step taken by us, specially the closing of our hospital work temporarily. We are hoping to do the same next January also.

In December last year I (Jesudason) spent nearly 3-weeks as a co-opted delegate at the International Christian Conference at Tambaram in response to the personal invitation of Dr. John R. Mott. There was a wonderful feeling of fellowship between the delegates

who came from so many different countries. We, the Indians, were specially impressed by the spirit of love and goodwill in our relationship with the delegates from China, and as one of the Indian delegates remarked, it was a case of "Love at first sight" between India and China! A good number of the delegates visited our Christukula Ashram after the Tambaram conference was over. To all of us, members of this Ashram family, it was a time of great inspiration. Dr. Kagawa from Japan spoke to the Ashram family several times specially on Christian Brotherhood and Co-operation. Bishop Henry Hobson of S. Ohio, U.S.A, gave us a very interesting account of his "way side cathedral". His message had a special significance to us as we were then just on the eve of undertaking our village tour. The Chinese friends specially Bishop Tsen, Dr. Wong and Dr. Yui gave moving addresses at Sandhya time on the situation in China. Dr. Kraemar gave a picturesque account of the people of Java, more especially of their "Shadow play", a sort of moving picture drama imported into Java by ancient Hindus from our own land. This shadow play exhibition is still in vogue in S. India. In a small village very near the Ashram we have witnessed it. It is most interesting to realise how our ancient Hindu civilization had influenced the far away island of Java.

The friends from Siam and Madagasear gave us also interesting accounts about their own lands. Per-

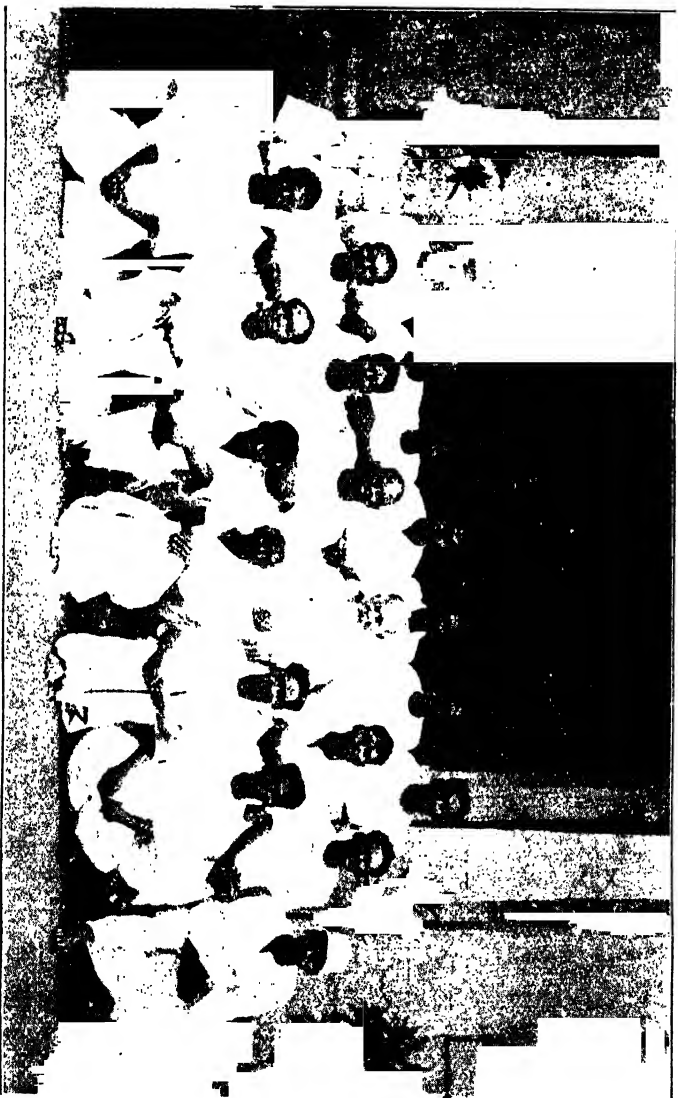
haps the most touching address given to us was by Mr. Tema, a negro friend from a visit to Mahatma Gandhi, and he gave us an account of his interview and also gave a vivid description of the political and social disabilities of the indigenous population of S. Africa. We felt that we had very much in common with these poor, afflicted brothers and sisters of S. Africa. We only wished that we in India could be of some practical service to the suffering people of other lands, especially to those in Africa and China. About a hundred rupees were collected from the offerings that our visitors had put into our alms box. We sent this amount (though it was little) towards the expenses of the Indian Ambulance unit in China.

On new Year day, Bishop Tarafdar of Bengal assisted by Rev. A. J. Appaswamy celebrated Holy Communion at the Ashram Jebalayam. The simple gentle sadhu like nature of Bishop Tarafdar appealed to us greatly as also did his helpful talks to us.

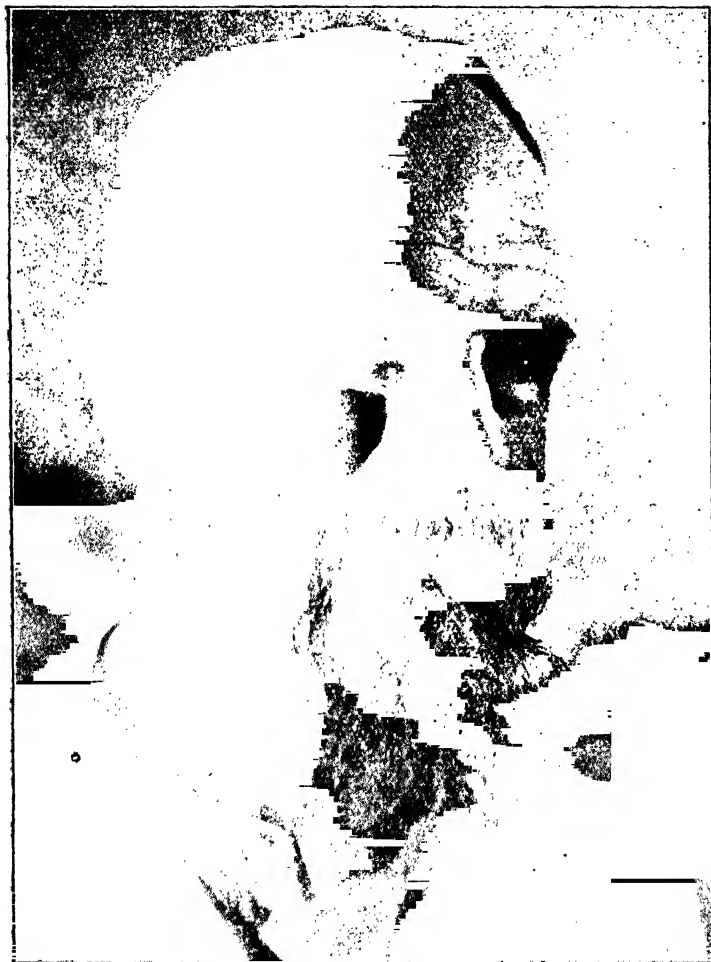
We shall now give you brief account of our doings during 1939. Before we left for the villages, we had a time of quiet retreat and prayer for about 2 days. We left on a Monday morning and on the Sunday night preceding there was a service of dedication at which some of our brothers also dedicated themselves for further service in the Ashram. After our return from the villages in the middle of February, patients began to come as usual and soon our hospital activities

resumed their normal form. As some of you know we have now additional accomodation in the new block of buildings where we treat the more serious cases and also perform major operations. In the Eye Dept. cataract patients have been the most numerous. The medical wards have been full as usual, and Eapen has been very helpful in assisting Paton in these Depts. On the surgical side as usual fractures of various kinds have been coming in, but we also had several major operations such as Gastro - Enterostomy, Herniotomy, appendicectomy etc. Raja has been very helpful on the Surgical side and has relieved Jesudason from attending to good deal of minor details in the hospital work. We were very happy to have had Miss Stanes for about 2 months helping in the hospital. Her help particularly in the arrangements with regard to the linen supply of the hospital has been very useful in bringing a certain amount of orderliness in the nursing side of the work. She gave instructions also to our male nurses. Though her stay was only for a short period, we are sure she will continue her interest in the Ashram by further visits whenever necessary.

Our Amma, Mrs. Shreenivasa, is now staying with her daughter in Bangalore. We miss her motherly care and attention but we are sure she is helping us with her prayers and loving sympathy. Miss Moses is now helping in our school, and Appadurai and



The Ashram Family with Rev. C. F. Andrews in the Centre.



Rev. C. F. Andrews.

Kandasamy are helping in the kitchen Dept. "Teddy" David continues as headmaster of the school.

The school has been wonderfully helped by a continuous supply of voluntary teachers. There is increasing enthusiasm among the village boys to continue their study up to the higher classes. But during times of sowing or harvest we have to be considerate and let them stay at home to help their parents. The stringent rule about attendance that the authorities expect in town school cannot be applied to this rural school of ours. A few months ago the foundation stone for the new building for the weaving section was laid by Rev. C. F. Andrews who spent the summer with us. It was a great inspiration to us to have him with us for some months. Apart from his helpful advice to us in tackling our day to day problems his devotional talks during "Sandhya" (sunset meditation) times were particularly useful to all of us. These have now been published.

In August, Paton and Devanandam David went to Jaffna in connection with the opening of a new Ashram by our good friend Rev. Selvaratnam. They also took part in the annual Jaffna convention for the deeping of spiritual life. Paton and Jaya David also attended the Moral Rearmament camp of the Oxford Group at Tumkur. Raja and Jesudason attended the Basic Educational conference at Poona recently and during this tour they visited also the Theological college at Banga-

lore, Kengeri Gurukula Ashram, Miraj medical school, Bombay, Nagpur, and Lenard Theological college at Jubbulpur and addreessd meetings in some of these places. During the return journey they visited Dornkal and Kammameth to see the work carried on by Bishop Azariah. Both here and at Madras they spoke about the Ashram and its work to Christian people and the students.

During the tour they also visited Wardha and Segaon and had an interview with Gandhiji. He was very distressed at the unwillingness of educated young men to offer themselves for unselfish service for others through Ashrams. He felt this was the result of the modern system of higher education.

This year during the beginning of the sowing season the villagers suffered from drought and what was worse, from an insect pest which ate away a good deal of the sprouting crops. But we are very thankful that the long expected rains came after all. Now every thing is green and fresh, the "Yeris" (irrigation lakes) have been filled, and the country side is looking most beautiful.

Several of you when you visited the Ashram would have met Mrs. David (Jesudason's elder sister) who lived quite near the Ashram. Since the beginning of the Ashram in 1921, she had been in the Ashram several times and acted as house mother. She used to help also

in the writing of devotional Tamil books. On Oct 12th she passed away into her eternal rest.

Some of our student workers who have finished their three years compounding training are thinking of leaving the Ashram about the end of this year. The Government have now limited the training of compounders to only nine of their own hospitals. We are therefore not permitted to train compounders any more. To trustfully depend upon God for supplying right personalities requires even greater faith than to trust Him for providing our material needs. We are looking forward in faith to God sending us qualified and truly consecrated workers both for our hospital and school. For now nearly 19 years He has been wonderfully providing voluntary workers for us.

Please pray,

- (1) that God may send us more workers with the sense of a definite call for this life of fellowship and service of the villagers, and that He may encourage and strengthen those of us who have given ourselves to this Ashram ;
- (2) that God may also guide us in planning and arranging for our tour in the villages at the beginning of the New Year ;
- (3) that at this time of world crisis this Ashram may be rightly guided as to what special part it has to play.

*" Bless the Lord. O, my soul, and forget not all
His benefits."*

*We send you all, members of His great Family
on earth, heartfelt love from this His little
family of the Christukula Ashram.*

On behalf of all the members of this Ashram family

Your Affectionate Brothers,

S. JESUDASON,
ERNEST F. PATON.

**Christukula Ashram,
Tirupattur, N. A.**

An Account of our Village Tour

FROM THE 16TH JANUARY TO 16TH FEBRUARY 1939.

About the beginning of Dec. 1938 we resolved upon closing the hospital work for a month from the first of the Tamil month of " Thai " and going on tour round the villages. Several considerations led us to this decision. For a number of days, we had been prayerfully considering this step in the special devotional meetings of the leaders.

The considerations may be stated somewhat as follows: The seventh day of March 1939 completes 18 years since the founding of the Ashram. As years pass by, the feeling grows in the minds of us, leaders, of the need of men who would take upon themselves our responsibility and the task begun by us and continue to carry on this piece of work for the Kingdom. This forces us to the necessity of finding out ways and means of placing ourselves in closer contact with our young fellow workers. We remembered how our dear Saviour, at the close of his ministry on earth, sought occasions to be alone with his disciples and to fit them for their work through close companionship and conversation.

A big institutional work involves several difficulties and is liable to peculiar temptations. A desire for power easily creeps in, creating friction in brother-hood and fellowship. Frequently the want of a sufficient number of workers causes strain and compels us to concentrate on medical and administrative aspects of our work thus tending to neglect the more vital matters of the spirit. And again a routine of institutional work tends to get our life settled to a mechanical performance of duties devoid of new life and this evil has to be watchfully guarded against. Such like thoughts have engaged the minds not only of the leaders but also of

some of the workers who have occasionally been troubled with questionings as to the worthwhileness of the sacrifice (like celibacy and sanyasam) which Ashram life demands of them, if it calls for no adventure and advance in pioneering service. Such matters do demand careful thought. Honest probing, even if it raises further doubts will result in good at the end. This led on our thoughts to the possibilities of touring among the villages throwing us all into more immediate and intimate contact with each other than is possible in the Ashram. For in this rural life we are day and night in sight of each other and get to know each other in an exceptional way. The need for mutual help, the bearing of one another's burdens, the common intercourse with, and the common love and labour for the villagers knit us together in a greater measure than under other circumstances. These and other things moreover help to give us a deeper insight into the meaning of service.

We are also faced with another difficulty in the Ashram. With the progress of Hospital and school work, there grows the demand for a larger number of professionally trained workers. This brings to us the temptation of taking men regardless of spiritual fitness. It is not the matter of professionally trained men that is our special need, but men that answer to the qualifications for Ashram life and to the call of "The Kingdom of God". In order to be true to our ideal, unless

there is a greater response of the right type of workers, we are led to the alternative of either curtailing hospital and school work or else entirely closing them and confining ourselves to village work. May God send us consecrated men constrained by the love of God in Christ and endowed with the spirit of service.

During the past 18 years of the Ashram's existence there are multitudes of men and women who have visited the Ashram from the villages and enjoyed the benefit of its hospital. We have not however been making sufficient efforts to cultivate and keep fresh the friendship, formed with them during their stay with us. But this tour has given us the opportunity of visiting many of those villages where our old patients live. For the most part they invited us to be their guests. We ate their food and often were brought into touch with their family life and problems, and so secured many opportunities of deepening friendship. In several instances we were treated as members of their own family. We came to know of the good traits in their character and learnt several lessons from them; and they too learnt a good many from us. Our stay with them gave them occasion to watch us and our daily religious life closely and see what of Christian discipleship means. There is hardly any privacy in village life, for each man's life is comparatively open to his neighbour. Our village friends often attended our family prayers, and the questions they put to us at such times afforded us splendid opportuni-

ties of speaking plainly to them about Christ. To know villagers we should live with them.

Even in the most distant villages we went to, we found our old patients or their relatives. As a rule they were glad to meet us and lovingly welcomed us. The sight of so many true and thankful friends whom our hospital work has gained for us was an agreeable surprise and filled us with cheer and thankfulness to God. Where we found suspicion about us or doubts as to our message of Jesus, it was only in the few places where none knew us. Our tour brought home to us the meaning of the scripture text "Cast thy bread upon the waters and you will find it after many days".

We caught another vision in our village tour. It was the vivid impression of the truth that God's call for Ashram work is not only to us, or to those who come to it from afar, or even only to those who bear the name of Christ, but also to the Hindu young men of those villages who are dear to the Father. We tried to get into touch with such promising young men and pray that God's call may find a response in them.

Why have we detailed the above at such length? The closing of the hospital work for a month may seem foolish to some of our Ashram friends. It may even raise doubts in the minds of several. Actually

we have heard of queer talks as to the cause of our action. Some village folks in these parts, ignorant of the real reason, attributed it to orders from Government. Some are reported to have said that the contribution from America has ceased and the doctors had gone there to raise money. (Our friends probably know that the name mistakenly given by the villagers to our hospital is "American Hospital"). Some even hazarded the opinion that the two doctors had quarreled and in consequence the hospital was being demolished; Others declared that the workers often made complaints about want of salary and about food and left the institution, and therefore the Ashram was to be closed. And there may be other interpretations and commentaries!

Ordinarily during Pongal festival days, people do not come to the Hospital and even the majority of those patients in the hospital leave for their homes. We therefore chose this time as the most suitable one for a month's closing of the hospital work. We had been giving due notice to the people of our intention during the whole month of December. And after making arrangements with one of the compounders for the dressing and care of the few who stayed in the hospital, we closed up our wards on the 14th January. We held a consecration service in the evening of Sunday the 15th at which some of the workers dedicated themselves to the service of the Ashram for some definite periods. On Monday the 16th we had our worship together

in the Jabalayam early in the morning at 4-30 and after getting things ready, started on our journey at 7-30, in bullock carts. As the school had a week's holiday for the Pongal festival the teachers also accompanied us and could join in the work for that time. We divided ourselves into two bands. One of them was under the leadership of Dr. Paton and went into the villages of the taluks of Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Harur and Uttankarai towards the West and the South of the Ashram. This band consisted of, in addition to the leader, brothers Rajarathnam Savarirayan, Aaron Appadurai, Kannaiya, Muthiah George Gnanavaram, Josiah Mathuranayagam, and as cook, Chinnasamy. They give a separate report of their work. (See Section two)

The other band under the leadership of Dr. Jesudason visited the villages in Tirupattur, Gudiyatham and Vellore taluks to the North and North-East of the Ashram. It consisted of, besides the leader, brothers Devanandam David, George Jeevothama, Chinniah J. Samuel, Jaya David, Edward David, and as cook Chinnapaiyan.

The first group had two single bullock carts and the second the newly built Ashram "Petti Vandi" cart drawn by two bullocks. Nicknamed "Chariot"! Some of our stoutly built brothers, like Josiah Maduranayagam and Raja Savarirayan walked on foot while, the "Gymnast" Jeevothama rode on a bicycle.

REPORT OF DR. JESUDASON'S BAND.

We set out singing and first got to the village of Agraharam at a distance of 5 miles from the Ashram. There we went round the unfinished building of the Perumal temple and the village shool and then visited the village Munsif. We spoke to them of the need of young men making a good use of their time and leading a good life, and suggested the introduction of a reading room, games etc., for the purpose.

Our next village was Nattarampalli $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles further on. There we lodged in the house of Sri Samundi Gounder and did work in the villages within a radius of 5 miles from that centre. Samundi Gounder gave us a very warm welcome. He was a most thoughtful host and made us comfortable in every way. At this point we may describe the daily programme of our work. As in the Ashram, we rose up early, had our morning devotion and then talked together on the scripture portion we had read. After our meal we went out to the surrounding villages. In these we visited the village school, had talks with the teacher and children and cheered and encouraged them with songs and story telling. We also made enquiries about the literary and educational facilities of the place, and we usually made a present to the teacher of a book on village sanitation and

suggested the teaching of hygiene to the children. Next we visited the chief men of the village, tried to make friends with them and conversed with them on general affairs. We treated the sick and helped them with a few medicines we always take with us. We spoke to the people on education, sanitation and other matters related to village uplift. In the evening after the Sandhya prayer and meditation in which often some villagers joined us, we showed them magic lantern pictures on the subjects mentioned above and also the pictures of the good Samaritan, The Good Shepherd and other parables of Our Lord, thus giving them the Christian message. As a rule crowds of people attended these evening meetings, and they eagerly bought gospel portions and books on sanitation. Many of them freely joined us in our evening and mid-day prayers in the villages. We also kept a diary of our daily life and activities.

Nattarampelli.

This name is a corruption of Rattinampalli which means the village of the spinning wheel. We visited the District Board Higher Elementary School. The Headmaster is a B. A., L. T. He is paid a monthly salary of only Rs. 25, a sum hardly sufficient for the support of his family. Our country is sorely in need of self sacrifice, and we highly commend any who accept a small pay like this provided it is done in

the spirit of voluntary self denial. The school is provided with big rooms for the teaching of weaving; and it has a trained teacher for the purpose. But when we were in the place there was nothing being done in that line as the District Board has not supplied the school with the necessary yarn, and the teacher was receiving his salary without any work.

There is a Ramakrishna Math or Religious House in the village. The Sanyasi in charge gives religious instructions to the children. He received us very kindly and showed us round. In this Ashram we saw a picture of Jesus on the Cross along with several other pictures of Hindu saints. There are 500 Sanyasis belonging to the Ramakrishna Mission (with its headquarters at Belur Math) doing work in different parts of India. The minimum educational qualification required of candidates for admission into membership is that they should hold a certificate of having passed the 10th standard. After a probation of 4 years in one of the Ashrams of the mission they are received as Brahmacharis (after 3 intermediate stages). Following a further period of 5 years (i. e. after 8 years in all) a Brahmachari (celibate) if considered fit is initiated into Sanyasa as a full member of the order on signing certain pledges. The Ramakrishna mission is doing very good practical social service through hospitals, schools

and several other forms of activities in connection with their Ashrams in various parts of India. The founder of this order, Ramakrishna Paramahansa was a great Indian mystic who believed in the unity of all religions.

Vellainakaneri.

This village is a mile and a half to the north west of Nattarampalli and has a lower Elementary school. The school and the garden presented a neat appearance. The teacher seemed to be devoted to his work and pupils. The village people gave us a hearty welcome and a quiet hearing and joined us in our evening devotion. At their request, we showed them magic lantern pictures on the evening of the 18th.

Adiperamanur.

This was our next village about a mile to the east of Nattarampalli and is also called Jagiri. The school here has 62 children on the roll and two teachers. One of the latter had been trained at Ranipet and was known to us. The village has 120 houses. The village Munsif, Muniraj Naidu, a frequent visitor to the Ashram hospital received us kindly and offered us fruits etc.

On our way back we came across a group of beggars who were camping under the shade of a tree on

the roadside. They were Telugu people and were carrying from village to village their tutelary goddess, Mari, in small temple-shaped palanquin boxes. The sight brought back to our memory the description given of his "wayside Cathedral" by our American friend, Bishop H. W. Hobson when he visited the Ashram a month ago !

Karuppanur.

We returned to our camp by way of Karuppanur, a hamlet consisting of a few sheds and huts, where an old man named Vilangamalli had a kindly conversation with us.

Vilakkalnatham.

This is five miles distant from Nattarampalli to the west. We were told that the name is a corrupted form of "Ellaikalnatham". We went to the village in our two-bullock power "motor"! We found the Panchayat Board school here closed, as it was a Bull-Festival day. All the villagers had been to see the celebrations in an adjoining village. Dr. Jesudason spoke to them on the folly of the way of their conducting a festivity which involved torture to the animals, and told them that the better way was to decorate and feed the bulls on that day and to have some sports like a running race, jumping, climbing and etc., for men and offer them prizes.

Mallapalli.

This big village lies to the south-west at a distance of 4 miles and has many large houses. The people seem to be wealthy but not charitably minded. They have spent much on their beautiful temple, but their school building is in a very bad condition. The teacher of the place brought a large number of people to our magic lantern show and talks and helped us a great deal in our cooking arrangements.

Thoppilagunda.

The village, a mile to the north has 25 houses. It has no school, the children attending the one at Nattrampalli. The inhabitants are Adi Dravidas and Kurumbars.

Kathari.

This is in the neighbourhood of the above village. Owing to the indifference either of the teachers or of the authorities concerned the school in the place had been closed. We met there an Achari student who had studied upto the 8th standard. We encouraged him to start and to conduct a night school which might in course of time get Government recognition. The village contains 30 houses occupied by Kammalars and Vaniars.

Nagathevanpatti.

The houses in this small village have no windows, the usual plea being fear of robbers. We told them that it was very insanitary.

Eklaspuram.

We moved our camp to this place on the 19th January. Rajadurai Gounder and Appavu comfortably lodged and boarded us in their own house. The latter (Appavu) had once undergone an operation for Appendicitis in the Ashram Hospital. Lakshmana Gounder and his brother Ramasami Gounder also welcomed and entertained us. The sons of another Lakshmana Gounder who lived opposite to where we lodged were educated men. One of them is a doctor and another a lawyer. We dined with them also. The old name of the place we were told was, Eka-lakshmanapuram which in course of time and in process of vulgar pronunciation got changed into the present name. There is a District Board School here with 5 standards. We were interested to find here a cup "clock" time keeper showing the duration of the flow of water from the village canal. A metal-cup with a hole at the bottom was floated in a vessel of water. A count was made of the number of times it filled and sank.

When we were here, 20 headmen of Ambalur came to us and earnestly requested us to start a

branch Ashram in their village and offered to give us the required site of land and other conveniences. We had to tell them that we could not do it because we did not have sufficient number of workers even for the central Ashram at Tirupattur and had in consequence to close the branch at Madavalam. We counselled them that they should raise up their own sons for Ashram work and train them for selfless service without always looking for help from outside. In answer to that question how they could do this we advised them to send their educated young men to our Ashram for training. One of them promised to send his son, a high school student, to the Ashram during the summer holidays.

Kethandapatti.

We visited the District Board School which has only one teacher for all the five standards. We met Mr. Amudu Iyengar congress worker who had been to Jail and is an acquaintance of Dr. Jesudason. We went round Amuthar temple in the Brahmin street.

Sankarapuram.

To the people of the village, which is a mile to the north east of Ekklaspuram we spoke with the help of Magic lantern pictures on sanitation, temperance and on the parables of the good Samaritan and the Good Shep-

herd. It was a moving sight to see poor parents eagerly buy for their sons Gospel portions and books on sanitation.

Vadakkupattu. (Kuttur)

The village a mile distant from Ekklaspuram has 60 houses. In close proximity to and as a part of it is Kuttur where we met two persons who had undergone operation in the Ashram Hospital.

Vadakkupattu school had 45 children who entertained us with songs to the accompaniment of Kummi, Kolattam and musical instruments. We also sang a song and taught it to them.

Ambalur.

Dr. Jesudason knows some of the men here and we visited them in their houses. The Board School here has 5 standards and 70 pupils..

Ramanaickanpettai.

The place a mile and a half from Ambalur has two temples. We saw the village munsif and some old friends. Sri. Rangasami of the Self Respect Movement gave us a good deal of help.

Avarankuppam.

Directly north, at a distance of a mile and a half is this small village with some huts inhabited by Vaniars, Vellalas and Adi Dravidas. The headman, T. Munisami

Gounder and K. Sadayappa Gounder seem to take lively interest in the Panchayat School which has 5 standards. Some of the people attended the Sandhya evening prayer we held in the place and bought Gospel portions.

Chikanankuppam.

This is a mile and a half to the north west of Eklaapuram and contains 100 houses. Of about a hundred children of school going age, only 5 attend the school in Sankarapuram. The people seemed to be very ignorant.

Arpandakuppam.

A mile to the north lies this village with a hundred houses and a tiled school building. Of the 180 school going children only 40 attend the school. When we taught them one of our national songs, a young man among them set it to a different and more melodious tune and sang it back to us. We related them the chief incidents in the life of Christ with the help of a picture roll.

Thumberi.

Four furlongs still to the north is this village, and it has a Panchayat School which is attended only by 30 from among 100 school going children. One Perianna Gounder welcomed us and offered us tender-cocoanut-water.

Thimmampettai.

It lies three miles to the west of Ekklapuram and is situated in a fertile part. There is a District Board School with five standards, two trained teachers and with a daily attendance of about 50 boys and 10 girls. Some children go to the school in the nearby village of Avarankuppam. There is also a District Board Dispensary with a midwife. The village has a big toddy shop. Two men, fully drunk greeted us with bowed heads, and showed us the way to the place. The potters' account of the trade they ply was noteworthy. They daily make 50 pots, of which only 30 come out of the kiln undamaged, and they are sold only at 4 pies each. We showed magic lantern pictures to the people.

We met the village munsiff, a frequent visitor to our Ashram Hospital and also our friend Changalappa Chettiar. They are building a new Hospital here. Dr. Jesudason who travelled to Thimmampet in a single bullock cart found his way very difficult through the crowd who were celebrating the bullock festival at Ramanaickenpettai. He talks to them about the evil of the practice of torturing animals for their pleasure mostly fell on deaf ears. At Avarankuppam, Dr. Jesudason had an interview with the Zamindar of Kangundhi who had helped the Ashram Hospital with a supply of some cots, tables and medicines.

Vaniambadi.

We do not visit villages on Sundays. We retire to a garden or tope and spend the time till mid day in quite Bible reading and devotion. We also read together for a while the diaries of our work during the past week and confer on the experiences. In the afternoon we visit people, mostly Christians and conduct services for them when the address is given by Dr. Jesudason. At Vaniambadi he spoke on 'Love' to the Christian congregation assembled at the house of Doctor Miss Gnanathistam, Rev. T. P. Gopalaswami who was present asked us to make frequent visits to this congregation and to bring cheer to them in that way.

Melshanakuppam.

On the 23rd we left Eklaspuram and pitched our camp at this village. Our parting with the three families who were our hosts was mutually sad. A drunken man from the adjoining village of Minnur led us into a wrong path and we had further difficulty in stopping him from following us. We got to our destination about 7 O'clock where Veeraswamy Mudaliar, Nalliah Mudaliar, and Sri Rajagopal who had training in paper making at Wardha and had known Dr. Jesudason greeted us and put us up in a good School building.

The District Board conducts two Schools here, one for girls and another for boys, the latter having

five standards. The mistress of the girls school is a Christian. The general idea prevailing in these parts is that Christians are Adi-Dravidas and consequently from the time a Christian was appointed as mistress, the people stopped sending their children to the girls school. Caste prejudice appeared to be very strong. We got 10 children from an adjoining cheri to attend the girls school and spoke to the people about the value of education. The teacher in the boys school Gopal Naidu, a young man has started a society called 'Hindu Sevasamithi Sangam' Scout Movement among the pupils and infuses life into them. He is enthusiastic and good natured. Rajagopal greatly helps the Sangam. Children also in Scout dress accompanied us wherever we went and rendered us varied kinds of help. We taught them songs and, their response was hearty.

These parts lie along the river Palar. The mountains around the cocoanut tope, with their beautiful foliage, green paddy fields and the sun set with the multicoloured horizon here presented a scenery picturesque, pleasing to the eye and infusing inspiration to our Sandhya (sunset devotion).

Vadakarai.

Mostly Vellalas live in this village which was half a mile from the camp. There is no school in the place ; the children go to the one in Melsanarkuppam. On the

banks of the river Talar stands a shrine dedicated to Gangaimariamman, the goddess who controls floods. Different calamities like those of nature or of infectious diseases that might happen to a village are attributed to different goddesses called "Amma" (mother). We tried to show to these simple people that these calamities do not come from God who is indeed like a mother (but not of the type they fear) but One who is full of even more tender love than our human mothers, and that so many of these epidemic diseases that carry away multitudes come from their ignorance of elementary rules of sanitation. We met here a woman Christian convert who seems to be completely ignorant of even the elementary principles of Christianity. What would our Lord say about this type of "conversion" that merely changes a person's name and "community" without producing any spiritual change in life and character? As people here were very much influenced by caste prejudice, we gave a magic lantern show of Rural uplift pictures particularly showing forth the evils of the caste system.

We visited several other villages after this, but we do not feel we should tire you with detailed descriptions of them all. We shall mention something of one or two of them before we conclude.

At Samariskuppam, we were the guests of our dear friend Mr. Sitha Rama Reddy, a young graduate lawyer,

and his people. His father is a very influential leader of the village besides being the village munsif. His daughters though kept under strict "purda" rules were all kind to us from behind the screen providing for us the most sumptuous meals! Staying with them almost as if we were members of the family we had very good opportunity of heart to heart talks with the father of the household on spiritual things. Both the father, and the son Mr. Sitha Rama were troubled about the problem of evil in this world though godly people claimed there was a loving Divine Providence ruling over all. We had occasions to point out to them the vicarious nature of much human suffering as exemplified in the life and suffering as exemplified in the life and sufferings of Jesus Christ, and also of the fact that God had not made us into unthinking machines but that He had given us freedom of will and choice. Goodness would be real goodness only when it is born of a person's own free will and choice.

We conducted services on Sundays for Christians both at Ambur (in Mr. Pragasam Samuel's house) and at Gudyattam (at the S.I.U.C. Church). We finished our tour at Madavalam where we have our branch Ashram building. Owing to lack of workers we do not at present have any Ashram workers permanently stationed at this branch Ashram. The harvest truly is great but the labourers are few. Pray that God may send forth consecrated labourers to His work.

REPORT OF DR. PATON'S BAND.

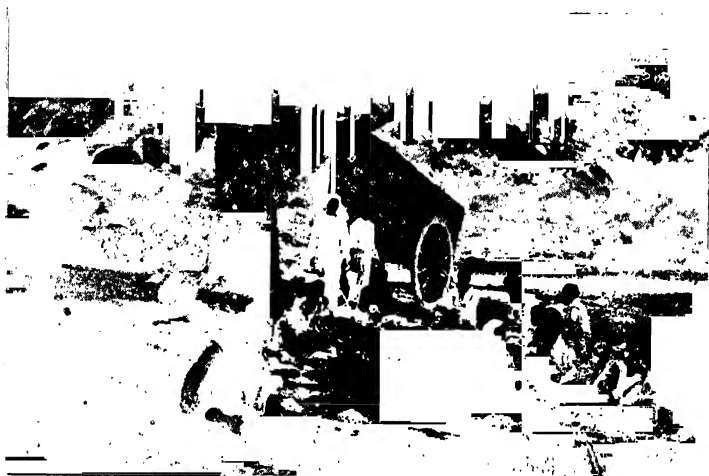
The reasons for our undertaking this village tour have been given above, but a word concerning our objective, may not be out of place. First of all we set out to visit many of our old patients and to see them in their own surroundings where we could get more intimate contact with them. In this way we sought opportunities both to help them in matters of health and village sanitation and also to bring to them the Gospel message of the love of Christ and his saving power, and secondly in doing this work we sought to get into closer fellowship with one another more especially through corporate waiting upon God and meditation on his work. In this way we did receive from him the daily bread of His message for ourselves, and also His plan of action for the work of each day. In the same way we had no definitely fixed itinerary but as we went on, the period we should stay in each place and the move to make became clear. This was a wonderfully helpful experience for us all and gave us a new sense of God's direction in every step of the daily life. The method we followed was to take turns in leading the 5 A.M. prayer and after the scripture reading 25 minutes or more were spent in silence, each of us noting down thoughts that came to us and then we told these to each other. Then there might be some further time for reading to work out together the plan of action to undertake different responsi-



The village scouts at Melshanarkuppam



Ashram workers and our village hosts



Ashram School children at picnic.



The bullock-carts in which Paton's party moved about in the villages.

bilities. We then united in prayer offering the whole day to God and seeking his blessings. Often also in the afternoon we met for a few minutes to get clear the programme for the evening Sandhya and later talk.

After the morning prayer and wash between 6-30 and 8 A.M. we took the opportunity of visiting some of the local people. Then after Chota we usually went in twos to visit the school and also some of the neighbouring villages or some of the former patients. By about 11 A.M. there would be a number of patients to be attended to and they would keep over two of us busy for an hour. Then about midday whenever permitted we went off to find a suitable well for a swim and also to wash our clothes, returning quite ready for our mid-day meal. Then a rest and some times letter writing followed by some tea. Again in the evening we followed up the morning's activities until about sunset time, when we went together for the Sandhya worship.

Whenever possible we met in some quiet spot outside the village and as a rule a number of our friends would join us. Sometimes it was a very large circle which we formed on a river bed or a threshing floor. We would start with a lyric usually from the small Pamalai so that all who could read join. Then some short scripture passage would be read with a few words of ex-

planation and then some time for silent meditation followed by a very short prayer and another lyric. Whenever our own worship was real the spirit of it was felt and apprehended by the people. Very soon after the Sandhya worship came our magic lantern talks and for these we invariably had good crowds. As a rule we began by telling them about one or two of the prevalent diseases and how they could prevent their spread. Then we would follow this with one or more parables — The Prodigal Son, The Good Shepherd or the Rich Fool, and then on the following day we took either a part or the whole of the life of Christ. And always we had a patient hearing. The daily open air speaking some times in rather noisy surroundings taxed our vocal powers at times, but as a rule three or four of us each took a part and so it relieved us and also gave a change for the audience. Night meal usually followed the lantern talk but here again we adapted ourselves to the custom of the particular village with regard to the time of their evening meal.

We all kept wonderfully fit and well with the exception of some few aches and pains and at our last village, for two days Raja was laid up with fever. In each place we went to, we were very thankful to God for the welcome the people gave us

and in almost all the places they were able to put some house or a part of a house at our disposal. Indeed we usually had the best accomodation in the village.

We shall not attempt to recount the details concerning the 13 villages we stayed at but just one or two outstanding memories of each place, for each place had an individuality of its own and there were marked differences between places even comparatively close together.

Our first halt was at Thokiam about 7 miles to the west of our Ashram. As we arrived we found that they were preparing for the cattle racing and bull bating fair. From 3 P. M. cattle and bulls were being raced down an enclosure and excited by drums and shouts they were charging about to the great delight of the crowds of villagers who had assembled from miles around to enjoy the fun. As the afternoon drew on, the poor beasts got tired out and the shoutings ceased. We seized the opportunity by showing the crowd the funny temperance posters we had brought. The village Band kindly desisted from their drumming and the crowd got quite interested and as the evening was darkening we hurriedly rigged our magic lantern and put on the parable of the Prodigal Son and told them the story of God's wonderful love. So, that night we praised God that

this crude cattle fair had not been all a vain show but had enabled some to hear the Gospel. Our next halt was at Pallathur a small village of 30 houses only two miles away to the south. Here we were welcomed and accomodated in one part of a spacious and very nicely built School with a well and garden attached. The land and the well were the gift of a woman Chinnathai Ammal a real mother of the people, and the building was also the gift of a neighbouring land owner and farmer who had also provided for a Dispensary and a School in the neighbouring village of Kandili. The public spiritedness of these people as well as the general cleanliness of the village and the well attended school (with 90 children and 3 teachers) were a joy to see and we had good opportunities of telling them stories and teaching songs. A mile away we found one or two hamlets where dense ignorance and superstition prevailed. At Pallathur we also had the privilege of taking part in the inauguration of a Parents Association in the School.

As Sunday was approaching we thought of spending it if possible with the Christians of Elithigiri Village some 14 miles further to the west. The last two miles of the way was rather a difficult and sandy country track and was a trial for our bulls.

The village is a large one with about 150 Roman Catholic families and a large church, and also about

25 Protestant families and a neat little Church built by the London Mission. Here we were able to take part in the Sunday worship and in the formation of a Young Mens' League and also had large audience for the open air lantern shows on both evenings. But we were distressed by the very untidy and insanitary and dirty state of the village. So, on this matter two of us made a visit to the French R. C. priest who had a nice house next to the Church. He was very pessimistic on any radical improvement being possible and confessed that the wealthier inhabitants owing to the evil odours of the place had moved and gone to houses on their own lands. Still we received great kindness here at the hands of some of our former patients and were glad to hear how free from brawls and also how much happier the place had become since the introduction of Prohibition.

Our next stopping place was Kaveripatnam (5 miles south west of Krishnagiri) where our friends had arranged for us to stay in the rest house at the side of the picturesque sandy bed of the Penniar River. This is a moderate sized town and our friends there especially the Naidus and Chettiars vied with one another in entertaining us during all the 4 days we spent amongst them. We were invited to give talks to the boys of the flourishing Middle school and also to the members of a literary association. The

Sandhya worship on the sandy river bed was well attended and helpful and we got opportunities for more intimate talks with some of the young men and conducted prayers in several homes. Two or three have already been taking interest in the Adi Dravidas, and with their help we arranged for the starting of a night school there and this was brought to function at a subsequent visit.

Karimangalam (8 miles further south) was rather a contrast, as we found only two or three who had come to the Hospital as patients. But we were able to make several friends who helped us. In particular we found one man who was very enthusiastically running a School on his own initiative ; he had about 43 boys and girls and was also coaching some for High School classes

It was here on Saturday afternoon that Paton disgraced himself by getting down with a bad headache as a result of a long midday search for a well to swim in. But that Saturday afternoon the others got together and it came to them that we should move on to Dharmapuri. By sunset the headache was gone and two of us went on ahead by bus to Dharmapuri to prepare the way for the rest, who after a lantern talk that night came on walking most of the 13 miles in the very early morning, so that we were all at Dharmapuri and attending the Church Service by 8-30 a.m., Paton giving the address.

We found many friends at Dharmapuri and they showed us great kindness. A newly built two storey house was placed at our disposal and most of our meals were provided. We had great opportunities here of meeting people both Christians and Non-Christians in their own homes, and we also were invited to speak to the boys of the High School and to the Hindi Sangham where there was a crowded meeting. The town is a large and flourishing centre and the progressive life there contrasted well with our sleepy Tirupattur.

Wednesday morning saw us starting out on our journey to Kambianellur a large Zamindari village which has much declined in wealth and status. Paton being in possession of the bicycle got there some time before the rest and almost at once was welcomed into a little village Reading Room and Dispensary by some members of the Congress. Two of the others who elected to walk found that the last so called shortcut of 2 miles extended themselves to 4 or 5 and they arrived to a rather exhausted condition. But the village folks had found a large unoccupied upstairs house for us and we soon recovered. By the banks of a pleasant little stream we had our evening Sandhya worship, and the next day the "Valibar Sangam" (Young Mens' Club) who used the same place for having wrestling and games came and joined in our worship and were so taken with lyrics we sang that they got us to copy them out for them to use, when they

met. Here some of us did some 'shock brigade' or cleaning up work, and as usual we had good audiences for our lantern talks.

Our next halt was by special invitation of an old and very grateful patient, the Mittadar of Anandur. He received us in royal style with welcome address and garlands and the village band. Unfortunately we arrived a little before the band were just ready to take us in solemn procession ! So we were spared that ordeal, but they fully made up for it afterwards by their vociferous piping. Here again we were in the lap of luxury, that is in relation to village conditions.

We visited several of the neighbouring villages, and were distressed to find the number of people suffering in various ways especially from malarial fever. In one Elementary School just on casual examination we found that 90% of the children had enlarged spleens. This same deplorable state of affairs we found also at other places in this area where for one or two months during the rainy weather the majority of the population are down with fever. Naturally there was a heavy demand upon our medicine chest. There are a great many palmyra trees in this area and the tapping of these for sweet palm juice and then boiling this down to make a dark brown sugar is one of the chief employments. The particular caste that climbs the trees are called Moopers (a Tamil word meaning Elders) and they gave us a specially cordial reception.

From here we had an easy stage of five miles to Kallavi where we spent one day, our old friend Doraisami Gounder being our host. This village is on the S. I. Railway line and has considerable trade in lime and is a market centre. We visited the School, (up to the 8th standard) and saw some of the village elders and also had some fellowship with a Christian teacher living in the outcaste hamlet. As the village is easily visited by train from Tirupattur we did not delay here but went on to Kunnathur.

Here we had only a few friends, but they showed us much kindness. The school up to the 5th standard was well attended and we very soon got into touch with the children who came round us very freely in the house where we were staying. So in the afternoon after their School was over we arranged games with them on the sandy river bed and had great fun and excitement. Some of them also joined us in our Sandhya worship and they came in crowds to the lantern talks. They were a lively crowd.

After two days we moved on to Uttankarai, a name that had become notorious to us as a centre from which chronic malaria patients come. There is a Government Dispensary in the charge of Dr. Amblavanan and knowing of our coming he had kindly made arrangements beforehand for us to stay in the traveller's bungalow. Uttankarai is a small

town which used to be the headquarters of a taluk of the same name now transferred to Harur. The place suffers greatly from lack of good water and bathing was a luxury. We were specially interested in a Government Girls' School where there was a Hindu teacher whose child had been a patient in the Ashram. She had taught the girls to sing simple stories from the Bible to their Kolattam dance which they performed very beautifully. One of the businessmen of the place was very friendly and invited us to have our lantern talks just opposite to his house. Dr. Ambalavanan also introduced us to several of the officials of the place whom we met at their club, but we found them more interested in their amusements than in the deeper things of life.

Next day all except Paton set off by the early morning bus for Harur, and there, met one or two old patients in whose house they gave us food and we had prayer and singing with them returning to Uttankarai in the evening in time for Sandhya. Large tracts of the country in this area consist of uncultivated scrub and jungle in the midst of which the 'flame of the forest' trees covered with blazing red blossoms formed a beautiful contrast.

The following day we moved on our camp to Singarapettai situated at the southern end of the Javadi hills. Here we had a number of friends

and a very nice house was provided for us. The village is about half Muslim and half Hindu and we found several Muslim friends who were eager to study the Gospel and to talk with us about it. In particular our old patient Subhan who had been in the Hospital for over a year as a result of a badly infected compound fracture of his femur, received us with great affection and also joined us in our little meeting of worship early on Sunday morning. For this we went out to a mango garden, and had a very helpful time of fellowship together each of us trying to express the new things that God had been showing us during the village tour.

We found the outcaste people in a very sad plight. We were glad to be able to co-operate with a Hindu who was doing good work i. e., running a night school for them. Here also Hindus and Muslims came in large numbers to our lantern talks and listened attentively while we told the story of Jesus.

Our last camping place was Kurumberi. Here though we had a number of friends they had no convenient unoccupied house to offer us and for the first time in our tour we took up our abode in a little mud thatched hut outside the village. At first this seemed like an anti-climax but soon we

realised that it was a fitting climax which brought us closer still to the poor in their daily struggle for existence, and from the other side of our mud wall came the strong odour of cattle which reminded us of where our Master was born.

Here we were invited into the houses of the rich and poor to attend to the sick and specially in the large outcaste quarters we had many patients. Caste feeling is rather strong in the village and there is a separate school for the outcaste children. Fortunately for our lantern talks we found a suitable place common to all, and we had specially large audiences, in spite of the strong wind which was a trial to speakers and listeners. One morning a friend took us to visit a little group of huts at the foot of the hills where the Erulas live. These poor people live in fact on roots dug up in the forest; but are also doing labouring work. We tried hard to get them to send their children to School and also to advise our friend who owned a nice farm near by to organise a little School for them. We have not heard of any success of these Efforts.

Our last evening Sandhya worship was held in the outcaste quarters, and almost the whole of the village was gathered together, and we meditated together about God's love and our part in it. It was with much joy

and thankfulness to God that we returned to the Ashram next morning after a month's absence and rejoined Dr. Jesudason and his group who got back here on the same day.



கிறிஸ்து குல (குடும்ப) ஆசிரமம்.

திருப்பத்தூர், (வடஆற்காடு ஜில்லா.)

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